

Chinese Literature



戊午小滿家三日氏筆心於小京

OCTOBER 1980



CONTENTS

No. 10, 1980

At Middle Age (a novelette) — <i>Shen Rong</i>	3
A New Woman Writer Shen Rong and Her Story "At Middle Age" — <i>Gladys Yang</i>	64
Three Poems — <i>Shu Ting</i>	78
FOLKTALES OF THE WEST LAKE	
The Bright Pearl	84
Golden Ox Lake	87
IN MEMORY OF AGNES SMEDLEY	
Lu Xun and Agnes Smedley — <i>Jan and Steve MacKinnon</i>	90
Reminiscences of Lu Xun — <i>Agnes Smedley</i>	97
NOTES ON ART	
Yan Han, the Woodcut Artist — <i>Wang Ruilin</i>	71
Fengxiang Coloured Clay Models — <i>Ren Xu</i>	104
BOOK REVIEW	
New Beginnings and Old Shadows — <i>Xin Yu</i>	106
INTRODUCING A CLASSICAL PAINTING	
Cui Zizhong's "An Immortal and His White Hare" — <i>Zhu Hengwei</i>	111
CULTURAL EXCHANGE	
Back Among Friends — <i>Chen Huangmei</i>	114
The Ashington Miners' Paintings — <i>Chang Pin</i>	117
THEATRE	
"Winter Jasmine": a New Play — <i>Hu Bian</i>	120
CULTURAL NEWS	
124	
PLATES	
Works by Yan Han	72-73
Fengxiang Coloured Clay Models	104-105
An Immortal and His White Hare — <i>Cui Zizhong</i>	112-113
COVER Plum Flowers — <i>Sun Qifeng</i>	

Chief Editor: Mao Dun

Published monthly by CHINESE LITERATURE
Beijing (37), China

Subscription and distribution: GUOJI SHUDIAN
P.O. Box 399, Beijing, China
Printed in the People's Republic of China

Shen Rong

At Middle Age

WERE the stars twinkling in the sky? Was a boat rocking on the sea? Lu Wenting, an oculist, lay on her back in hospital. Circles of light, bright or dim, appeared before her eyes. She seemed to be lifted by a cloud, up and down, drifting about without any direction.

Was she dreaming or dying?

She remembered vaguely going to the operating theatre that morning, putting on her operating gown and walking over to the wash-basin. Ah, yes, Jiang Yafen, her good friend, had volunteered to be her assistant. Having got their visas, Jiang and her family were soon leaving for Canada. This was their last operation as colleagues.

Together they washed their hands. They had been medical students in the same college in the fifties and, after graduation, had been assigned to the same hospital. As friends and colleagues for more than twenty years, they found it hard to part. This was no mood for a doctor to be in prior to an operation. Lu remembered

This is a slightly abridged translation of the short novel "At Middle Age" (《人到中年》) by Shen Rong (谌容), which first appeared in the Shanghai bi-monthly *Harvest* (《收获》) No. 1, 1980.

she had wanted to say something to ease their sadness. What had she said? She had turned to Jiang and inquired, "Have you booked your plane tickets, Yafen?"

What had been her reply? She had said nothing, but her eyes had gone red. Then after a long time Jiang asked, "You think you can manage three operations in one morning?"

Lu couldn't remember what she had answered. She had probably gone on scrubbing her nails in silence. The new brush hurt her fingertips. She looked at the soap bubbles on her hands and glanced at the clock on the wall, strictly following the rules, brushing her hands, wrists and arms three times, three minutes each. Ten minutes later she soaked her arms in a pail of antiseptic, 75 per cent alcohol. It was white — maybe yellowish. Even now her hands and arms were numb and burning. From the alcohol? No. It was unlikely. They had never hurt before. Why couldn't she lift them?

She remembered that at the start of the operation, when she had injected novocaine behind the patient's eyeball, Yafen had asked softly, "Has your daughter got over her pneumonia?"

What was wrong with Jiang today? Didn't she know that when operating a surgeon should forget everything, including herself and her family, and concentrate on the patient? How could she inquire after Xiaojia at such a time? Perhaps, feeling miserable about leaving, she had forgotten that she was assisting at an operation.

A bit annoyed, Lu retorted, "I'm only thinking about this eye now."

She lowered her head and cut with a pair of curved scissors.

One operation after another. Why three in one morning? She had had to remove Vice-minister Jiao's cataract, transplant a cornea on Uncle Zhang's eye and correct Wang Xiaoman's squint. Starting at eight o'clock, she had sat on the high operating stool for four and a half hours, concentrating under a lamp. She had cut and stitched again and again. When she had finished the last one and put a piece of gauze on the patient's eye, she was stiff and her legs wouldn't move.

Having changed her clothes, Jiang called to her from the door, "Let's go, Wenting."

"You go first." She stayed where she was.

"I'll wait for you. It's my last time here." Jiang's eyes were watery. Was she crying? Why?

"Go on home and do your packing. Your husband must be waiting for you."

"He's already packed our things." Looking up, Jiang called, "What's wrong with your legs?"

"I've been sitting so long, they've gone to sleep! They'll be OK in a minute. I'll come to see you this evening."

"All right. See you then."

After Jiang had left, Lu moved back to the wall of white tiles, supporting herself with her hands against it for a long time before going to the changing-room.

She remembered putting on her grey jacket, leaving the hospital and reaching the lane leading to her home. All of a sudden she was exhausted, more tired than she had ever felt before. The lane became long and hazy, her home seemed far away. She felt she would never get there.

She became faint. She couldn't open her eyes, her lips felt dry and stiff. She was thirsty, very thirsty. Where could she get some water?

Her parched lips trembled.

2

"Look, Dr Sun, she's come to!" Jiang cried softly. She had been sitting beside Lu all the time.

Sun Yimin, head of the Ophthalmic Department, was reading Lu's case-history and was shocked by the diagnosis of myocardial infarction. Very worried, the greying man shook his head and pushed back his black-rimmed spectacles, recalling that Lu was not the first doctor aged about forty in his department who had fallen ill with heart disease. She had been a healthy woman of forty-two. This attack was too sudden and serious.

Sun turned his tall, stooping frame to look down at Lu's pale face. She was breathing weakly, her eyes closed, her dry lips trembling slightly.

"Dr Lu," Sun called softly.

She didn't move, her thin, puffy face expressionless.

"Wenting," Jiang urged.

Still no reaction.

Sun raised his eyes to the forbidding oxygen cylinder, which stood at a corner of the room and then looked at the ECG monitor. He was reassured when he saw a regular QRS wave on the oscilometer. He turned back to Lu, waved his hand and said, "Ask her husband to come in."

A good-looking, balding man in his forties, of medium height, entered quickly. He was Fu Jiajie, Lu's husband. He had spent a sleepless night beside her and had been reluctant to leave when Sun had sent him away to lie down on the bench outside the room.

As Sun made way for him, Fu bent down to look at the familiar face, which was now so pale and strange.

Lu's lips moved again. Nobody except her husband understood her. He said, "She wants some water. She's thirsty."

Jiang gave him a small teapot. Carefully, Fu avoided the rubber tube leading from the oxygen cylinder and put it to Lu's parched lips. Drop by drop, the water trickled into the dying woman's mouth.

"Wenting, Wenting," Fu called.

When a drop of water fell from Fu's shaking hand on to Lu's pallid face, the muscles seemed to twitch a little.

3

Eyes. Eyes. Eyes. . . .

Many flashed past Lu's closed ones. Eyes of men and women, old and young, big and small, bright and dull, all kinds, blinking at her.

Ah! These were her husband's eyes. In them, she saw joy and sorrow, anxiety and pleasure, suffering and hope. She could see

through his eyes, his heart. His eyes were as bright as the golden sun in the sky. His loving heart had given her so much warmth. It was his voice, Jiajie's voice, so endearing, so gentle, and so far away, as if from another world:

"I wish I were a rapid stream,

.....

If my love

A tiny fish would be,

She'd frolic

In my foaming waves."

Where was she? Oh, she was in a park covered with snow. There was a frozen lake, clear as crystal, on which red, blue, purple and white figures skated. Happy laughter resounded in the air while they moved arm in arm, threading their way through the crowds. She saw none of the smiling faces around her, only his. They slid on the ice, side by side, twirling, laughing. What bliss!

The ancient Five Dragon Pavilions shrouded in snow were solemn, tranquil and deserted. They leaned against the white marble balustrades, while snowflakes covered them. Holding hands tightly, they defied the severe cold.

She was young then.

She had never expected love or special happiness. Her father had deserted her mother when she was a girl, and her mother had had a hard time raising her alone. Her childhood had been bleak. All she remembered was a mother prematurely old who, night after night, sewed under a solitary lamp.

She boarded at her medical college, rising before daybreak to memorize new English words, going to classes and filling scores of notebooks with neat little characters. In the evenings she studied in the library and then worked late into the night doing autopsies. She never grudged spending her youth studying.

Love had no place in her life. She shared a room with Jiang Yafen, her classmate, who had beautiful eyes, bewitching lips and who was tall, slim and lively. Every week, Jiang received love let-

ters. Every weekend, she dated, while poor Lu did nothing, neglected by everyone.

After graduation, she and Jiang were assigned to the same hospital, which had been founded more than a hundred years earlier. Their internship lasted for four years, during which time they had to be in the hospital all day long, and remain single.

Secretly, Jiang cursed these rules, while Lu accepted the terms willingly. What did it matter being in the hospital twenty-four hours a day? She would have liked to be there forty-eight hours, if possible. No marriage for four years. Hadn't many skilled doctors married late or remained single all their lives? So she threw herself heart and soul into her work.

But life is strange. Fu Jiajie suddenly entered her quiet, routine life.

She never understood how it happened. He had been hospitalized because of an eye disease. She was his doctor. Perhaps, his feelings for her arose from her conscientious treatment. Passionate and deep, his emotions changed both their lives.

Winter in the north is always very cold, but that winter he gave her warmth. Never having imagined love could be so intoxicating, she almost regretted not finding it earlier. She was already twenty-eight, yet she still had the heart of a young girl. With her whole being, she welcomed this late love.

"I wish I were a deserted forest,
.....
If my love
A little bird would be,
She'd nest and twitter
In my dense trees."

Incredible that Fu Jiajie, whom Jiang regarded as a bookworm and who was doing research on a new material for a spacecraft in the Metallurgical Research Institute, could read poetry so well!

"Who wrote it?" Lu asked.

"The Hungarian poet Petöfi."

"Does a scientist have time for poetry?"

"A scientist must have imagination. Science has something in common with poetry in this respect."

Pedantic? He gave good answers.

"What about you? Do you like poetry?" he asked.

"Me? I don't know anything about it. I seldom read it." She smiled cynically. "The Ophthalmic Department does operations. Every stitch, every incision is strictly laid down. We can't use the slightest imagination..."

Fu cut in, "Your work is a beautiful poem. You can make many people see again..."

Smiling, he moved over to her, his face close to hers. His masculinity, which she had never experienced before, assailed, bewildered and unnerved her. She felt something must happen, and, sure enough, he put his arms round her, embracing her tightly.

It had occurred so suddenly that she looked fearfully at the smiling eyes close to hers and his parted lips. Her heart thumping, her head raised, she closed her eyes in embarrassment, moving away instinctively as his irresistible love flooded her.

Beihai Park in the snow was just the right place for her. Snow covered the tall dagoba, Qiongdao Islet with its green pines, the long corridor and quiet lake. It also hid the sweet shyness of the lovers.

To everyone's surprise, after her four-year internship had ended, Lu was the first to get married. Fate had decided Fu Jiajie's intrusion. How could she refuse his wish that they marry? How insistently and strongly he wanted her, preparing to sacrifice everything for her!...

"I wish I were a crumbling ruin,
.....
If my love
Green ivy would be,
She'd tenderly entwine
Around my lonely head."

Life was good, love was beautiful. These recollections gave her strength, and her eyelids opened slightly.



4

5

She seemed to be walking along an endless road, not a winding mountain path which urged people on, nor a narrow one between fields of fragrant rice. This was a desert, a quagmire, a wasteland, devoid of people and silent. Walking was difficult and exhausting.

Lie down and rest. The desert was warm, the quagmire soft. Let the ground warm her rigid body, the sunshine caress her tired limbs. Death was calling softly, "Rest, Dr Lu!"

Lie down and rest. Everlasting rest. No thoughts, feelings, worries, sadness or exhaustion.

But she couldn't do that. At the end of the long road, her patients were waiting for her. She seemed to see one patient tossing and turning in bed with the pain in his eyes, crying quietly at the threat of blindness. She saw many eager eyes waiting for her. She heard her patients calling to her in despair, "Dr Lu!"

This was a sacred call, an irresistible one. She trudged on the long road dragging her numb legs, from her home to the hospital, from the clinic to the ward, from one village to another with a medical team. Day by day, month by month, year by year, she trudged on. . . .

"Dr Lu!"

Who was calling? Director Zhao? Yes. He had called her by phone. She remembered putting down the receiver, handing over her patient to Jiang, who shared her consulting-room, and heading for the director's office.

She hurried through a small garden, ignoring the white and yellow chrysanthemums, the fragrance of the osmanthus and the fluttering butterflies. She wanted to quickly finish her business with Zhao and return to her patients. There were seventeen waiting that morning, and she had only seen seven so far. Tomorrow she was on ward duty. She wanted to make arrangements for some of the out-patients.

She remembered not knocking but walking straight in. A man and woman were sitting on the sofa. She halted. Then she saw Director Zhao in his swivel-chair.

"Come in please, Dr Lu," Zhao greeted her.

She walked over and sat down on a leather chair by the window.

The large room was bright, tidy and quiet, unlike the noisy clinic, where sometimes the children howled. She felt odd, unused to the quietness and cleanliness of the room.

The couple looked cultured and composed. Director Zhao was always erect and scholarly looking, with well-groomed hair, a kind face and smiling eyes behind gold-rimmed spectacles. He had on a white shirt, a well-pressed light grey suit and shining black leather shoes.

The man sitting on the sofa was tall and greying at the temples. A pair of sun-glasses shielded his eyes. Lu saw at a glance that he had eye trouble. Leaning back against the sofa, he was playing with his walking-stick.

The woman in her fifties was still attractive, despite her age. Though her hair was dyed and permed, it did not look cheap. Her clothes were well-cut and expensive.

Lu remembered how the woman had sized her up, following her about with her eyes. Her face showed doubt, uneasiness and disappointment.

"Dr Lu, let me introduce you to Vice-minister Jiao Chengsi and his wife Comrade Qin Bo."

A vice-minister? Well, in the past ten years and more, she had treated many ministers, Party secretaries and directors. She had never paid attention to titles. She simply wondered what was wrong with his eyes. Was he losing his sight?

Director Zhao asked, "Dr Lu, are you in the clinic or on duty in the ward?"

"Starting from tomorrow, I'll be on ward duty."

"Fine," he laughed. "Vice-minister Jiao wants to have his cataract removed."

That meant she was given the task. She asked the man, "Is it one eye?"

"Yes."

"Which one?"

"The left one."

"Can't you see with it at all?"

The patient shook his head.

"Did you see a doctor before?"

As she rose to examine his eye, she remembered he named a hospital. Then his wife, who was sitting beside him, politely stopped her.

"There's no hurry, Dr Lu. Sit down, please. We ought to go to your clinic for an examination." Smiling, Qin Bo turned to Director Zhao. "Since he developed eye trouble, I've become something of an oculist myself."

Though Lu didn't examine him, she stayed a long time. What had they talked about? Qin had asked her many personal questions.

"How long have you been here, Dr Lu?"

She hadn't kept track of the years. She only remembered the year she had graduated. So she answered, "I came here in 1961."

"Eighteen years ago." Qin counted on her fingers.

Why was she so interested in this? Then Director Zhao chipped in, "Dr Lu has a lot of experience. She's a skilled surgeon."

Qin went on, "You don't seem to be in good health, Dr Lu."

What was she driving at? Lu was so busy caring for others, that she had never given any thought to her own health. The hospital didn't even have her case-history. And none of her leaders had ever inquired after her health. Why was this stranger showing such concern? She hesitated before answering, "I'm very well."

Zhao added again, "She's one of the fittest. Dr Lu's never missed a day's work for years."

Lu made no answer, wondering why this was so important to this lady, and fretting to get back to her patients. Jiang couldn't possibly cope with so many alone.

Her eyes fixed on Lu, the lady smiled and pressed, "Are you sure you can remove a cataract easily, Dr Lu?"

Another difficult question. She had had no accidents so far,

but anything could happen if the patient didn't co-operate well or if the anaesthetic was not carefully applied.

She couldn't recollect whether she had made a reply, only Qin's big eyes staring at her with doubt, unsettling her. Having treated all kinds of patients, she had got used to the difficult wives of high cadres. She was searching for a tactful answer when Jiao moved impatiently and turned his head to his wife, who stopped and averted her gaze.

How had this trying conversation finished? Oh, yes, Jiang had come to tell her that Uncle Zhang had come for his appointment.

Qin quickly said politely, "You can go, Dr Lu, if you're busy."

Lu left the big bright room, which was so suffocating. She could hardly breathe.

She was suffocating.

6

Shortly before the day ended, Director Zhao hurried over to the internal medicine ward.

"Dr Lu's always enjoyed good health, Dr Sun. Why should she have this sudden attack?" his hands in his pockets, Zhao asked Sun as they headed for Lu's ward. Eight years Sun's junior, Zhao looked much younger, his voice more powerful.

He shook his head and went on, "This is a warning. Middle-aged doctors are the backbone of our hospital. Their heavy responsibilities and daily chores are ruining their health. If they collapse one by one, we'll be in a fix. How many people are there in her family? How many rooms does she have?"

Looking at Sun, who was depressed and worried, he added, "What? . . . Four in a room? So that's how it is! What's her wage? . . . 56.50 yuan! That's why people say better to be a barber with a razor than a surgeon with a scalpel. There's some truth in it. Right? Why wasn't her salary raised last year?"

"There were too many. You can't raise everyone's," Sun said cynically.

"I hope you'll talk that problem over with the Party branch.

Ask them to investigate the work, income and living conditions of the middle-aged doctors and send me a report."

"What's the use of that? A similar report was sent in in 1978," Sun retorted politely, his eyes on the ground.

"Stop grumbling, Dr Sun. A report's better than nothing. I can show it to the municipal Party committee, the Ministry of Health and whomever it concerns. The Central Party Committee has stressed time and again that talented people and intellectuals should be valued and their salaries increased. We can't ignore it. The day before yesterday, at a meeting of the municipal committee, it was stressed that attention should be paid to middle-aged personnel. I believe their problems will be solved." Zhao stopped when they entered Lu's room.

Fu Jiajie stood up as Zhao entered. He waved his hand in greeting and walked over to Lu, bent down and examined her face. Then he took her case-history from her doctor. From a director he had turned into a doctor.

Zhao, a noted thorax expert, had returned to China after Liberation. Very enthusiastic politically, he was praised for both his political consciousness and his medical skill, joining the Party in the fifties. When later he was made director, he had to take part in so many meetings and do so much administrative work, that he seldom found the opportunity to see patients except for important consultations. During the Cultural Revolution, he had been detained illegally and made to sweep the hospital grounds. The last three years, as director again, he had been so tied up with daily problems that he practically had no time or energy for surgery.

Now he had come specially to see Lu. All the ward doctors had gathered behind him.

But he didn't say anything startling. Having read the case-history and looked at the ECG monitor, he told the doctors to note any changes and watch out for complications. Then he asked, "Is her husband here?"

Sun introduced Fu. Zhao wondered why this charming man in his prime was already going bald. Apparently, a man who didn't

know how to look after himself couldn't look after his wife either.

"It won't be easy," Zhao told him. "She needs complete rest. She'll need help for everything, even to turn over in bed. Help twenty-four hours a day. Where do you work? You'll have to ask for leave. You can't do it all by yourself either. Is there anyone else in your family?"

Fu shook his head. "Just two small children."

Zhao turned to Sun, "Can you spare someone from your department?"

"For one or two days, maybe."

"That'll do to begin with."

His eyes returning to Lu's thin pale face, Zhao still couldn't understand why this energetic woman had suddenly collapsed.

It occurred to him that she might have been too nervous operating on Vice-minister Jiao. Then he dismissed the thought. She was experienced and it was highly improbable that an attack had been brought on by nervousness. Besides, myocardial infarction often had no obvious cause.

But he couldn't dismiss the notion that there was some kind of a link between Jiao's operation and Lu's illness. He regretted having recommended her. In fact, Jiao's wife, Qin Bo, had been reluctant to have her right from the beginning.

That day, after Lu's departure, Qin had asked, "Director Zhao, is Dr Lu the vice-head of her department?"

"No."

"Is she an attending doctor?"

"No."

"Is she a Party member?"

"No."

Qin said bluntly, "Excuse my outspokenness since we're all Party members, but I think it's rather inappropriate to let an ordinary doctor operate on Vice-minister Jiao."

Jiao stopped her by banging his walking-stick on the floor. Turning to her he said angrily, "What are you talking about, Qin Bo? Let the hospital make the arrangements. Any surgeon can operate."

Qin retorted heatedly, "That's not the right attitude, Old Jiao. You must be responsible. You can work only if you're healthy. We must be responsible to the revolution and the Party."

Zhao quickly butted in to avoid a quarrel, "Believe me, Comrade Qin, although she's not a Communist, Lu's a good doctor. And she's very good at removing cataracts. Don't worry!"

"It's not that, Director Zhao. And I'm not being too careful either." Qin sighed, "When I was in the cadre school, one old comrade had to have that operation. He was not allowed to come back to Beijing. So he went to a small hospital there. Before the operation was through his eyeball fell out. Jiao was detained by the followers of the gang for seven years! He has just resumed work. He can't do without his eyes."

"Nothing like that will happen, Comrade Qin. We've very few accidents in our hospital."

Qin still tried to argue her point. "Can we ask Dr Sun, the department head, to operate on Jiao?"

Zhao shook his head and laughed. "Dr Sun's almost seventy and has poor eyesight himself! Besides, he hasn't operated for years. He does research, advises the younger doctors and teaches. Dr Lu's a better surgeon than he."

"How about Dr Guo then?"

Zhao stared. "Dr Guo?" She must have made a thorough investigation of the department.

She prompted, "Guo Ruqing."

Zhao gestured helplessly. "He's left the country."

Qin wouldn't give up. "When is he coming back?"

"He's not."

"What do you mean?" This time she stared.

Zhao sighed. "Dr Guo's wife returned from abroad. When her father, a shopkeeper, died, he left his store to them. So they decided to leave."

"To leave medicine for a store? I can't understand it." Jiao sighed too.

"He's not the only one. Several of our capable doctors have left or are preparing to go."

Qin was indignant. "I don't understand their mentality."

Jiao waved his stick and turned to Zhao, "In the early fifties, intellectuals like you overcame many difficulties to return here to help build a new China. But now, the intellectuals we've trained are leaving the country. It's a serious lesson."

"This can't go on," said Qin. "We must do more ideological work. After the gang was smashed, the social status of intellectuals was raised a lot. Their living and working conditions will improve as China modernizes."

"Yes. Our Party committee holds the same view. I talked with Dr Guo twice on behalf of the Party and begged him to stay. But it was no use."

Qin, who was about to continue, was stopped by Jiao who said, "Director Zhao, I didn't come to insist on having an expert or a professor. I came because I've confidence in your hospital, or to be exact, because I have a special feeling for your hospital. A few years ago, the cataract in my right eye was removed here. And it was superbly done."

"Who did it?" Zhao asked.

Jiao answered sadly, "I never found out who she was."

"That's easy. We can look up your case-history."

Zhao picked up the receiver, thinking that Qin would be satisfied if he got that doctor. But Jiao stopped him. "You can't find her. I had it done as an out-patient. There was no case-history. It was a woman with a southern accent."

"That's difficult." Zhao laughed, replacing the receiver. "We have many women doctors who speak with a southern accent. Dr Lu also comes from the south. Let her do it."

The couple agreed. Qin helped Jiao up and they left.

Was this the cause of Lu's illness? Zhao couldn't believe it. She had performed this operation hundreds of times. She wouldn't be so nervous. He had gone over before the operation and found her confident, composed and well. Why this sudden attack, then?

Zhao looked again at Lu with concern. Even on the brink of death, she looked as if she were sleeping peacefully.

7

Lu was always composed, quiet and never flustered. Another woman would have retorted or shown her indignation at Qin's insulting questions or, at very least, felt resentful afterwards. But Lu had left Zhao's office as calm as ever, neither honoured to be chosen to operate on Vice-minister Jiao nor humiliated by Qin's questions. The patient had the right to decide whether or not he wanted an operation. That was all there was to it.

"Well, what big official wants you this time?" Jiang asked softly.

"It's not definite yet."

"Let's hurry." Jiang steered her along. "I couldn't persuade your Uncle Zhang. He's made up his mind not to have the operation."

"That's nonsense! He's travelled a long way to get here and spent much money. He'll be able to see after the transplant. It's our duty to cure him."

"Then you talk him round."

Passing by the waiting-room, they smiled and nodded at the familiar patients who stood up to greet them. Back in her room, while Lu was seeing a young man, she was interrupted by a voice booming, "Dr Lu!"

Both Lu and her patient looked up as a tall sturdy man advanced. In his fifties, he was broad-shouldered, wearing black trousers and a shirt and a white towel round his head. At his cry, the people in the corridor quickly made way for him. A head above everyone else and almost blind, he was unaware that he attracted so much attention as he groped his way in the direction of Lu's voice.

Lu hurried forward to help him. "Sit down, please, Uncle Zhang."

"Thank you, Dr Lu. I want to tell you something."

"Yes, but sit down first." Lu helped him to a chair.

"I've been in Beijing quite a while now. I'm thinking of going home tomorrow and coming back some other time."

"I don't agree. You've come such a long way and spent so much money. . . ."

"That's just it," Uncle Zhang cut in, slapping his thigh. "So I think I'll go home, do some work and earn some more work-points. Although I can't see, I can still do some work and the brigade's very kind to me. I've made up my mind to leave, Dr Lu. But I couldn't go without saying goodbye to you. You've done so much for me."

Having suffered from corneal ulcers for many years, he had come to the hospital to have a transplant, a suggestion proposed by Lu when she had visited his brigade with a medical team.

"Your son spent a lot of money to send you here. We can't let you go home like this."

"I feel better already!"

Lu laughed. "When you're cured, you can work for another twenty years since you're so strong."

Uncle Zhang laughed. "You bet I will! I can do anything if my eyes are good."

"Then stay and have them treated."

Zhang confided, "Listen, Dr Lu, I'll tell you the truth. I'm worried about money. I can't afford to live in a Beijing hotel."

Stunned, Lu quickly told him, "I know you're next on the list. Once there's a donor, it'll be your turn."

He finally agreed to stay. Lu helped him out. Then a little girl of eleven accosted her.

Her pretty, rosy face was marred by a squint. Dressed in hospital pyjamas, she called timidly, "Dr Lu."

"Why don't you stay in the ward, Wang Xiaoman?" She had been admitted the previous day.

"I'm scared. I want to go home." She began to cry. "I don't want an operation."

Lu put one arm around her. "Tell me why you don't want an operation."

"It'll hurt too much."

"It won't, you silly girl! I'll give you an anaesthetic. It won't hurt at all." Lu patted her head and bent down to look with regret at the damaged work of art. She said, "Look, won't it be

nice when I make this eye look like the other one? Now go back to your ward. You mustn't run around in a hospital."

When the little girl had wiped away her tears and left, Lu returned to her patients.

There had been many patients the last few days. She must make up for the time she had lost in Zhao's office. Forgetting Jiao, Qin and herself, she saw one patient after another.

A nurse came to tell her she was wanted on the phone.

Lu excused herself.

It was the kindergarten nurse informing her, "Xiaojia has a temperature. It started last night. I know you're busy, so I took her to the doctor, who gave her an injection. She's still feverish and is asking for you. Can you come?"

"I'll be there in a minute." She replaced the receiver.

But she couldn't go immediately since many patients were waiting. She rang her husband, but was told that he had gone out to a meeting.

Back in her office, Jiang asked, "Who called? Anything important?"

"Nothing."

Lu never troubled others, not even her leaders. "I'll go to the kindergarten when I'm through with the patients," she thought as she returned to her desk. At first she imagined her daughter crying and calling her. Later she saw only the patients' eyes. She hurried to the kindergarten when she had finished.

8

"Why did it take you so long?" the nurse complained.

Lu walked quickly to the isolation room where her little daughter lay, her face flushed with fever, her lips parted, her eyes closed, her breathing difficult.

She bent over the crib. "Mummy's here, darling."

Xiaojia moved and called in a hoarse voice, "Mummy, let's go home."

"All right, my pet."

She first took Xiaojia to her own hospital to see a pediatrician.

"It's pneumonia," the sympathetic doctor told her. "You must take good care of her."

She nodded and left after Xiaojia had been given an injection and some medicine.

In the hospital everything stood still at noon, the out-patients having left, the in-patients sleeping and the hospital staff resting. The spacious grounds were deserted except for the chirping sparrows flying among the trees. Nature still competed with men in this noisy centre of the city, where tall buildings rose compactly and the air was polluted. In the hospital all day, Lu had never been aware of the birds before.

She couldn't make up her mind where to take her daughter, hating to leave the sick child alone in the kindergarten's isolation room. But who could look after her at home?

After some hesitation she steeled herself and headed for the kindergarten.

"No. I don't want to go there," Xiaojia wailed on her shoulder.

"Be a good girl, Xiaojia. . . ."

"No. I want to go home!" She began kicking.

"All right. We'll go home."

They had to go along a busy street with recently pasted advertisements of the latest fashions. Lu never so much as glanced at the costly goods in the shopwindows, or the produce the peasants sold in the streets. With two children, it was hard to make ends meet. Now, carrying Xiaojia in her arms and worrying about Yuanyuan at home, she was even less eager to look around.

Arriving home at one o'clock, Lu found a pouting Yuanyuan waiting for her. "Why are you so late, mummy?" he asked.

"Xiaojia's ill," Lu answered curtly, putting Xiaojia on the bed, undressing her and tucking her in.

Standing at the table Yuanyuan fretted, "Please cook lunch, mummy. I'll be late."

In frustration, Lu shouted at him, "You'll drive me crazy if you go on like that!"

Wronged and in a hurry, Yuanyuan was on the point of tears.

Ignoring him, Lu went to stoke up the fire, which had almost gone out. The pots and the cupboard were empty. There were no left-overs from yesterday's meals.

She went back into the room, reproaching herself for having been so harsh on the poor boy.

In the past few years, keeping house had become an increasing burden. During the Cultural Revolution her husband's laboratory had been closed down and his research project scrapped. All he had needed to do was to show his face in the office for an hour in the morning and afternoon. He spent the remainder of his day and talents on domestic chores, cooking and learning to sew and knit, lifting the burden entirely from Lu's shoulders. After the gang was smashed, scientific research was resumed and Fu, a capable metallurgist, was busy again. Most of the housework was shouldered once more by Lu.

Every day at noon, she went home to cook. It was an effort to stoke up the fire, prepare the vegetables and be ready to serve the meal in fifty minutes so that Yuanyuan, Fu and herself could return to school or work on time.

When anything unexpected cropped up, the whole family went hungry. She sighed and gave her son some money. "Go and buy yourself a bun, Yuanyuan."

He turned back half-way, "What about you, mummy?"

"I'm not hungry."

"I'll buy you a bun too."

Yuanyuan soon came home with two buns and gave one to his mother. He left for school immediately, eating his on the way.

Biting into the cold hard bun, Lu looked around at her small room, which was twelve metres square.

She and her husband had been content with a simple life, living in this room since their marriage, without a sofa, wardrobe or a new desk. They had the same furniture they had used when they were single.

Though they owned few material possessions, they had many books. Aunt Chen, a neighbour, had commented, "What will the two bookworms live on?" But they were happy. All they



had wanted was a small room, some clothes, and three simple meals a day.

Treasuring their time, they put their evenings to good use. Every night, when their neighbours' naughty children peeped into their small room to spy on the new couple, they invariably found them at work: Lu occupying their only desk studying foreign material with the help of a dictionary and taking notes, while Fu read reference books on a stack of chests.

The evening was not wasted when they could study late quietly and undisturbed. In the summer, their neighbours sat cooling themselves in the courtyard, but the smell of tea, the light breeze, bright stars, interesting news and conversation... none of these could lure them from their stuffy little room.

Their quiet life and studious evenings ended much too soon. Lu gave birth to Yuanyuan and then to Xiaojia. Their lovely children brought disorder and hardship as well as joy to their lives. When the crib was later replaced by a single bed and the tiny room filled with children's clothes, pots and pans, they could hardly move about. Peace was shattered by their children laughing and crying.

What could an oculist achieve without keeping up with foreign developments in the field? Therefore, Lu often sat reading behind a curtain in the room late into the night.

When Yuanyuan began school he had to use their only desk. Only when he had finished doing his homework was it Lu's turn to spread out her notebook and the medical books she had borrowed. Fu came last.

How hard life was!

Lu fixed her eyes on the little clock: One five, one ten, one fifteen. Time to go to work. What should she do? Lots of things needed winding up before she went to the ward tomorrow. What about Xiaojia? Should she call her husband? There was no telephone booth near by and, anyway, she probably could not get him. As he had wasted ten years, better not disturb him.

She frowned, at a loss what to do.

Perhaps she shouldn't have married. Some claimed that marriage ended love. She had naively believed that, though it might

be true for some, it could not happen to her. If she had been more prudent, she would not have been weighed down by the burdens of marriage and a family.

One twenty. She must turn to her neighbour Aunt Chen, a kind-hearted woman who had helped on many occasions. . . . Since she would not accept anything for her services, Lu was reluctant to trouble her.

Still she had to this time. Aunt Chen was most obliging, "Leave her to me, Dr Lu."

Lu put some children's books and building blocks beside Xiaojia, asked Aunt Chen to give her the medicine and hurried to the hospital.

She had intended to tell the nurse not to send her too many patients so that she could go home early, but once she started work, she forgot everything.

Zhao called her up to remind her that Jiao was to be admitted the following day.

Qin called twice asking about the operation and how Jiao and his family should prepare mentally and materially.

Lu was hard put to it to give an answer. She had performed hundreds of such operations and no one had ever asked her that before. So she said, "Oh, nothing special."

"Really? But surely it's better to be well prepared. What if I come over and we have a chat?"

Lu quickly told her, "I'm busy this afternoon."

"Then we'll talk tomorrow in the hospital."

"OK."

When the trying conversation had ended, Lu had returned to her office. It was dark before she had finished her clinic.

Arriving home she heard Aunt Chen singing an impromptu song:

"Grow up, my dear,
To be an engineer."

Xiaojia laughed happily. Lu thanked Aunt Chen and was relieved to find Xiaojia's temperature down.

She gave her an injection. After Fu returned, Jiang Yafen and her husband, Liu, called.

"We've come to say goodbye," said Jiang.

"Where are you going?" Lu inquired.

"We've just got our visas for Canada," replied Jiang, her eyes fixed on the ground.

Liu's father, a doctor in Canada, had urged them to join him there. Lu had not expected them to go.

"How long will you stay? When will you come back?" she asked.

"Maybe for good." Liu shrugged his shoulders.

"Why didn't you let me know earlier, Yafen?" Lu turned to her friend.

"I was afraid that you'd try to stop me. I was afraid I'd change my mind." Jiang avoided her eyes, staring hard at the ground.

From his bag, Liu produced some wine and food and said in high spirits, "I bet you haven't cooked yet. Let's have our farewell banquet here."

9

10

After their guests had gone and the children were asleep, Lu washed up in the kitchen. In their room, she found her husband, leaning against the bed, deep in thought, his hand on his forehead.

"A penny for them, Jiajie." Lu was surprised he looked so depressed.

Fu asked in reply, "Do you remember Petöfi's poem?"

"Of course!"

"I wish I were a crumbling ruin. . . ." Fu removed his hand from his forehead. "I'm a ruin now, like an old man. Going bald and grey. I can feel the lines on my forehead. I'm a ruin!"

He did look older than his age. Upset, Lu touched his forehead. "It's my fault! We're such a burden to you!"

Fu took her hand and held it lovingly. "No. You're not to blame."

"I'm a selfish woman, who thinks only about her work." Lu's voice quivered. She couldn't take her eyes away from his forehead. "I have a home but I've paid it little attention. Even when I'm not working, my mind is preoccupied with my patients. I haven't been a good wife or mother."

"Don't be silly! I know more than anyone how much you've sacrificed!" He stopped as tears welled up in his eyes.

Nestling up against him, she said sadly, "You've aged. I don't want you to grow old. . . ."

"Never mind. 'If my love green ivy would be, she'd tenderly entwine around my lonely head.'" Softly he recited their favourite poem.

In the still autumn night, Lu fell asleep against her husband's chest, her lashes moist with tears. Fu put her carefully on the bed. Opening her eyes she asked, "Did I fall asleep?"

"You're very tired."

"No. I'm not."

Fu propped himself up and said to her, "Even metal has fatigue. A microscopic crack is formed first, and it develops until a fracture suddenly occurs."

That was Fu's field of research, and he often mentioned it. But this time, his words carried weight and left a deep impression on Lu.

A dreadful fatigue, a dreadful fracture. In the quiet of the night, Lu seemed to hear the sound of breaking. The props of heavy bridges, sleepers under railways, old bricks and the ivy creeping up ruins . . . all these were breaking.

II

The night deepened.

The pendent lamp in the room having been turned off, the wall lamp shed a dim blue light.

Before her eyes flitted two blue dots of light, like fireflies on

a summer night or a will-o'-the-wisp in the wilderness, which turned into Qin's cold stare when she looked carefully.

Qin, however, had been warm and kind when she summoned Lu to Jiao's room the morning he entered the hospital. "Sit down please, Dr Lu. Old Jiao has gone to have his ECG done. He'll be back in a minute."

All smiles, she had risen from an armchair in a room in a quiet building with red-carpeted corridors reserved for high cadres.

Qin had asked her to sit in the other armchair, while she went over to the locker beside the bed and got out a basket of tangerines, which she placed on the side table between the chairs.

"Have a tangerine."

Lu declined. "No, thank you."

"Try one. They were sent to me by a friend in the south. They're very good." She took one and offered it to her.

Lu took it, but held it in her hand. Qin's new friendliness sent a chill down her spine. She was still conscious of the coldness in Qin's eyes when they had first met.

"What actually is a cataract, Dr Lu? Some doctors told me that an operation is not suitable for all cases." Qin's manner was humble and ingratiating.

"A growth which progressively covers the eyeball, destroying the sight." Looking at the tangerine in her hand, Lu explained, "It can be divided into stages. It's better to have the operation done when the cataract is mature."

"I see. What happens if it isn't done then?"

"The lens shrinks as the cortex is absorbed. The suspensory ligament becomes fragile. The difficulty of the operation increases as the lens is liable to be dislocated."

Qin nodded.

She had not understood nor tried to understand what she had been told. Lu wondered why she had bothered to ask questions. Just passing time? Having started her ward duty only that morning, she had to familiarize herself with the cases of her patients and attend to them. She couldn't sit there, making small talk. She wanted to check Jiao's eyes if he returned soon.

Qin had more questions for her. "I heard there was an artifi-

cial lens abroad. The patient needn't wear a convex lens after an operation. Is that right?"

Lu nodded. "We're experimenting on that too."

Qin inquired eagerly, "Can you put one in for my husband?"

Lu smiled. "I said it's still at the experimental stage. I don't think he'd want one now, do you?"

"No." Of course she didn't want him to be a guinea-pig. "What is the procedure for his operation?"

Lu was baffled. "What do you mean?"

"Shouldn't you map out a plan in case something unexpected crops up?" As Lu looked blank, she added, "I've often read about it in the papers. Sometimes surgeons form a team to discuss and work out a plan."

Lu couldn't help laughing. "No need for that! This is a very simple operation."

Disgruntled, Qin looked away. Then she turned back and pressed her point patiently with a smile, "Underestimating the enemy often leads to failure. This has happened in the history of our Party." Then she got Lu to describe certain situations which could cause the operation to fail.

"One has to think twice about patients with heart trouble, hypertension or bronchitis. Coughing can create problems."

"That's just what I feared," Qin cried, striking the arm of her chair. "My husband's heart isn't good and he has high blood pressure."

"We always examine the patient thoroughly before an operation," Lu consoled her.

"He has bronchitis too."

"Has he been coughing lately?"

"No. But what if he does on the operating-table? What shall we do?"

Why was she so anxious, Lu wondered, looking at her watch. The morning was almost gone. Her glance fell on the white lace curtain hanging beside the French windows and tension gripped her when the footsteps approaching the door moved away again. After a long time, Jiao, a blue and white dressing gown round his shoulders, was helped in by a nurse.

Qin commented, "It's taken you a long time!"

Jiao shook Lu's hand and flopped down exhausted in the armchair. "There were lots of examinations. I had a blood test, an X-ray, and an ECG. The staff were all very kind to me. I didn't have to wait my turn."

He sipped the cup of tea Qin handed him. "I never thought an eye operation involved so many tests."

Lu read the reports. "The X-ray and the ECG are normal. Your blood pressure's a bit high."

Qin piped up. "How high?"

"150 over 100. But that doesn't matter." Then she asked, "Have you been coughing recently, Vice-minister Jiao?"

"No," he answered lightly.

Qin pressed, "Can you guarantee that you won't cough on the operating-table?"

"Well. . . ." Jiao was not so sure.

"That's important, Old Jiao," Qin warned him gravely. "Dr Lu just told me that if you cough, the eyeball can fall out."

Jiao turned to Lu. "How can I be certain I won't cough?"

"It's not that serious. If you are a smoker, don't smoke before the operation."

"OK."

Qin pressed again. "But what if you should cough? What will happen?"

Lu laughed. "Don't worry, Comrade Qin. We can sew up the incision and open it again after he stops coughing."

"That's right," said Jiao. "When I had my right eye operated on, it was sewn up and then opened again. But it wasn't because I coughed!"

Curiosity made Lu ask, "Why then?"

Jiao put down his cup and took out his cigarette case, but put it away again remembering Lu's advice. With a sigh he related, "I'd been labelled as a traitor and was having a difficult time. When the sight went in my right eye I had an operation. Soon after it started, the rebels came and tried to force the surgeon not to treat me. I nearly choked with indignation, but the doctor

calmly sewed up the incision, threw the rebels out and then removed the cataract."

"Really?" Stunned, Lu asked, "Which hospital was that?"

"This one."

A coincidence? She looked at Jiao again to see whether she had seen him before, but could not recognize him.

Ten years ago, she had been operating on a so-called traitor when she had been interrupted by some rebels. That patient's name was Jiao. So it *was* he! Later, the rebels from Jiao's department, collaborating with a rebel in the hospital, put up a slogan claiming that "Lu Wenting betrays the proletariat by operating on the traitor Jiao Chengsi".

No wonder she hadn't recognized him. Ten years ago, Jiao, sallow and depressed, dressed in an old cotton-padded coat, had come to the hospital alone as an ordinary patient. Lu suggested an operation and made an appointment, which he kept. When she began operating she heard the nurse saying outside, "No admittance. This is the operating theatre."

Then she heard shouting and noises. "Shit! He's a traitor. We're against treating traitors."

"We won't allow stinking intellectuals to treat traitors."

"Force open the door!"

Jiao, indignant, said on the operating-table, "Let me go blind, doctor. Don't do it."

Lu warned him against moving and quickly sewed up the incision.

Three men charged in, while the more timid ones hesitated at the door. Lu sat there immobile.

Jiao said the doctor had thrown them out. As a matter of fact, Lu had not. She had sat on the stool by the operating-table in her white gown, green plastic slippers, blue cap and mask. All that could be seen of her were her eyes and her bare arms above the rubber gloves. The rebels were awed perhaps by her strange appearance, the solemn atmosphere of the operating theatre and the bloody eye exposed through a hole in the white towel covering the patient. Lu said tersely from behind her mask, "Get out, please!"

The rebels looked at each other and left.

When Lu resumed work, Jiao told her, "Don't do it, doctor, they'll only blind me again even if you cure me. And you may get involved."

"Keep quiet." Lu worked swiftly. When she was bandaging him, all she had said was, "I'm a doctor." That was how it had happened.

The rebels from Jiao's department, coming to the hospital to put up a big-character poster denouncing her for curing a traitor, had created quite a sensation. But what did it matter? She was already being criticized for being a bourgeois specialist. These charges and this operation had not left much impression on her. She had forgotten all about it, until Jiao had brought it up.

"I really respect her, Dr Lu. She was a true doctor," Qin sighed. "Pity the hospital kept no records then. I can't find out who she was. Yesterday I expressed my wish to Director Zhao to have her operate on my husband." Lu's awkward expression made her add, "I'm sorry, Dr Lu. Since Director Zhao has confidence in you, we will too. I hope you won't let him down. Learn from that doctor. Of course, we've a lot to learn from her too, don't you agree?"

Lu had no alternative but to nod.

"You're still young," Qin said encouragingly. "I heard you haven't joined the Party yet. You must strive for it, comrade."

Lu told her frankly, "I don't have a good class background."

"That's not the way to look at things. You can't choose your family but you can choose what you do with your life." Qin was eloquent and enthusiastic. "Our Party does pay attention to class origins, but not exclusively. It's your attitude that counts. When you draw the line between yourself and your family, get close to the Party and make contributions to the people, then the Party will open its doors to you."

Lu crossed the room to draw the curtain and examined Jiao's eye. Then she told Jiao, "If it's all right with you, let's do the operation the day after tomorrow."

Jiao answered briskly, "All right. The earlier the better."

It was already after six when Lu took her leave. Qin hurried

out after her. "Are you going home, Dr Lu?"

"Yes."

"Shall I arrange for Jiao's car to take you?"

"No, thank you." Lu declined with a wave of her hand.

12

It was almost midnight, the ward was very quiet. A single wall lamp cast a pale blue light on an intravenous drip, from which the medicine was dropping, as if the only sign of Dr Lu's life.

Fu, sitting at the side of the bed, stared blankly at his wife. It was the first time that he had sat alone with her since her collapse, probably the first time that he had looked at her so intently for the past dozen years.

He remembered that once he had fixed his eyes on her for a long time, and she had asked, her head on one side, "Why do you look at me like that?" Sheepishly he had turned his eyes away. That was when they were courting. But now she could neither move her head nor speak. Vulnerable, she was unable to raise a protest.

Only then did he notice that she looked surprisingly frail and old! Her jet-black hair was streaked with grey; her firm, tender skin, loose and soft; and there were lines on her forehead. The corners of her mouth, once so pretty, were now drooping. Her life, like a dying flame, was petering out fast. He could not believe that his wife, a firm character, had become so feeble overnight!

She was not weak, he knew that well. Slim in build, she was in fact fit and strong. Though her shoulders were slight, she silently endured all hardships and sudden misfortunes. She never complained, feared or became disheartened.

"You're a tough woman," he had often said to her.

"Me? No, I'm timid. Not tough at all." Her answer was always the same.

Only the night before she had fallen ill, she had made, as Fu put it, another "heroic decision" that he should move to his institute.

Xiaoja had quite recovered by then. After Yuanyuan had done

his homework, the children went to bed. At last there was peace in the small room.

Autumn had come, the wind was cold. The kindergarten had asked parents for their children's winter clothes. Lu took out the cotton-padded coat Xiaoja had worn the previous year, ripped it apart, made it bigger and sewed on a new pair of cuffs. Then she spread it out on the desk and added a layer of new cotton padding.

Fu took his unfinished article from the bookcase and, hesitating for a brief second beside the desk, sat down on the bed.

"Just a moment," Lu said without turning her head, hurrying, "I'll soon finish."

When she removed the coat from the desk, Fu remarked, "If only we could have another small room. Even six square metres, just big enough for a desk."

Lu listened, lowering her head, busy sewing. After a while, she hastily folded up the unfinished coat and said, "I've got to go to the hospital now. You can have the desk."

"But why? It's late," he queried.

She said, while putting on her jacket, "There will be two operations tomorrow morning and I want to check how the patients are. I'll go and have a look at them."

She often went to the hospital in the evening in fact. So Fu teased her, saying, "Though you're here at home, your heart's still in the hospital."

"Put on more clothes. It's cold," he urged.

"I won't be long," she said quickly. With an apologetic smile, she continued, "Two funny patients, you know. One's a vice-minister. His wife's been worrying to death about the operation and making an awful fuss. So I must go to see him. The other's a little girl. She told me today that she had a lot of nightmares and slept badly."

"OK, doc!" He smiled. "Get going and come back soon!"

She left. When she returned he was still burning the midnight oil. Not wanting to disturb him, she said after tucking up the children's quilt, "I'm going to bed first."

He looked round, saw she was in bed and again buried himself in his papers and books. But soon he sensed that she had not

fallen asleep. Was it perhaps the light? He bent the lamp lower, shielded the light with a newspaper and carried on with his work.

After a while, he heard her soft, even snoring. But he knew that she was faking. Many times, she had tried to pretend she slept well, so he could feel at ease studying late. In fact he had long since seen through her little trick, but he had no heart to expose it.

Some time later, he got to his feet, stretched and said, "All right! I'll sleep too."

"Don't worry about me!" Lu said quickly. "I'm already half asleep."

Standing with his hands on the edge of the desk, he hesitated, looking at his unfinished article. Then he made up his mind and said, closing all the books, "I'll call it a day."

"How about your article? How can you finish it if you don't make full use of your nights?"

"One night can't make up for ten years."

Lu sat up, threw a sweater over her shoulders and said in earnest, her head against the bed board, "Guess what I've been thinking just now?"

"You oughtn't to have thought of anything! Now close *your* eyes. You'll have to cure other people's eyes tomorrow."

"It's no joke. Listen, I think you should move into your institute. Then you'll have more time."

Fu stared at her. Her face was glowing, her eyes dancing. Obviously she was very pleased with the idea.

She went on, "I'm serious. You've things to do. I know, the children and I have been hampering you."

"Come off it! It's not you..."

Lu broke in, "Of course it is! We can't divorce. The children need their father, and a scientist needs his family. However, we must think of some way to turn your eight working hours into sixteen."

"But the children and the housework will all fall on you. That won't do!"

"Why not? Even without you, we can manage."

He listed all the problems, to which she answered one by one.

Finally she said, "Haven't you often remarked that I'm a tough woman? I can cope. Your son won't go hungry, your daughter won't be ill-treated."

He was convinced. So they decided to have a try the next day.

"It's so very difficult to do something in China!" Fu said undressing. "During the war, many old revolutionaries died for a new China. Now to modernize our country, again our generation has to make sacrifices though hardly anyone notices it."

He kept talking to himself like this. When he put his clothes on the back of a chair and turned to get into bed, he saw that Lu had fallen asleep. With a faint smile on her face, she looked pleased with her proposal, even in her dreams.

But who would imagine their trial would fail on the very first day?

13

The operations were successful, though Lu's private plan failed.

That morning when she had entered the ward ten minutes early as usual, Dr Sun was already there waiting for her.

"Good morning, Dr Lu," he greeted her, "we've got a donor's eye today. Can we fit in the corneal transplant?"

"Excellent! We've got a patient who's anxious to have the operation done as soon as possible," Lu exclaimed in delight.

"But you already have two operations scheduled for this morning. Do you think you can manage a third?"

"Sure," she replied, straightening up as if showing him that she was perfectly capable.

"OK, it's settled then." He had made up his mind.

Holding the arm of Jiang, who had just arrived, Lu headed for the operating theatre. She was in high spirits, walking with a spring in her step, as though on an outing.

The operating theatres of this hospital, occupying a whole floor, were large and impressive. The big characters "Operating Theatres" in red paint on the beige glass door were striking. When a wheeled stretcher bearing a patient was pushed through this door,

his relatives remained outside, anxiously looking at the mysterious, perhaps even frightening place, as if Death were lurking about inside.

But in fact, the operating theatre was a place of hope. Inside, the walls along the wide corridor were painted a light, agreeable green. Here there were the operating theatres for the various departments. The surgeons, their assistants, anaesthetists and theatre nurses scurried to and fro lightly. No laughter, no chatter. This was the most quiet, most orderly area of the large hospital, into which more than a thousand patients poured every day.

Vice-minister Jiao was brought into one of these theatres, and then put on a high cream-coloured operating-table. His head was covered by a sterilized white towel. There was an olive-shaped hole in it revealing one of his eyes.

Lu, already in her overall sat on a stool near the operating-table, her gloved hands raised. The height of the stool was adjustable. Lu, being small, had to raise it whenever she operated. But today, it had already been adjusted. She turned and glanced at Jiang gratefully, realizing she had done it.

A nurse pushed the surgical instrument table nearer to Lu. The adjustable plate was now placed above the patient's chest, within the surgeon's reach.

"Shall we start now?" Lu asked watching Jiao's eye. "Try to relax. We'll first inject a local anaesthetic. Then your eye will feel numb. The operation won't take long."

At this, Jiao suddenly cried out, "Steady on!"

What was wrong? Both Lu and Jiang were taken aback. Jiao pulled away the towel from his face, striving to raise his head. He inquired, pointing at Lu, "It was you, Dr Lu, who operated before on my eye?"

Lu quickly raised her gloved hands lest he touch them. Before she could speak, he went on emotionally, "Yes, it was you. It must have been you! You said the same words. Even your tone and intonation are the same!"

"Yes, it was me," Lu had to admit.

"Why didn't you tell me before? I'm so grateful to you."

"Never mind. . . ." Lu could not find anything else to say. She

cast a glance at the towel, beckoned the nurse to change it. Then she said again, "Shall we start, Vice-minister Jiao?"

Jiao sighed. It was hard for him to calm down. Lu had to say in a commanding tone, "Don't move. Don't speak. We'll start now."

She skilfully injected some novocaine into his lower eyelid and began the operation. She had performed such operations umpteen times, but every time she picked up her instruments, she felt like a raw recruit on the battlefield. Lu held out two tapering fingers to pick up a needle-holder which looked like a small pair of scissors. She fixed the needle to the instrument.

"What's the matter?" Jiang asked softly.

Instead of answering, Lu held the hook-shaped needle up to the light to examine it.

"Is this a new one?"

Jiang had no idea, so they both turned to the nurse.

"A new needle?"

The nurse stepped forward and said in a low voice, "Yes, a new one."

Lu had another look at the needle pin and grumbled, "How can we use such a needle?"

Lu and some other doctors had complained many times about the poor quality of their surgical instruments. However, faulty ones appeared from time to time. Lu could do nothing about it. When she found good scalpels, scissors and needles, she would ask the nurse to keep them for her for later use.

She had no idea that all the surgical instruments had been replaced by new ones that day, but unfortunately there was a bad needle among them. Whenever such things occurred, Lu's good-natured face would change, and she would reprimand the nurse. The young nurse, though innocent perhaps, could not defend herself. There was nothing to say in the circumstances. A blunt needle not only prolonged the operation, but also increased the patient's suffering.

Frowning, Lu said quietly, so that Jiao could not overhear, "Bring me another!"

It was an order, and the nurse picked out an old needle from a sterilizer.

The theatre nurses respected Lu, while at the same time being afraid of her. They admired her skill and feared her strictness. A doctor's authority was established through his scalpel. A good oculist could give a blind man back his sight, while a bad one might blind him permanently. Lu had no position, no power, but through her scalpel she wielded authority.

The operation was almost complete, when Jiao's body jerked suddenly.

"Don't move!" Lu warned him.

"Don't move!" Jiang repeated quickly. "What's the matter?"

"I . . . want to . . . cough!" a strangled voice sounded from under the towel.

This was just what his wife had feared would happen. Why choose this moment to cough? Was it psychological? A conditioned reflex?

"Can you control it for a minute?"

"No, I . . . I can't." His chest was heaving.

There was no time to lose! Lu hurriedly took emergency measures, while calming him down, "Just a second! Breathe out and hold your cough!"

She was quickly tying up the suture while he exhaled, his chest moving vigorously as if he would die of suffocation at any moment. When the last knot was done, Lu sighed with relief and said, "You can cough now, but not too loudly."

But he did not. On the contrary, his breath gradually grew even and normal.

"Go ahead and cough. It won't matter," Jiang urged again.

"I'm awfully sorry," Jiao apologized. "I'm all right now. Carry on with the operation please."

Jiang rolled her eyes, wanting to give him a piece of her mind. A man of his age should know better. Lu threw her a glance, and Jiang bit back her resentment. They smiled knowingly at each other. It was all in the day's work!

Lu snipped off the knots and started the operation again. It continued without a hitch. Afterwards Lu got off the stool and

sat at a small table to write out a prescription, while Jiao was moved back on to the wheeled stretcher. As it was being pushed out, Jiao suddenly called to Lu, like a kid who has misbehaved, his voice trembling slightly.

Lu stepped over to him. His eyes had been bandaged. "Anything I can do?" she stooped to ask.

He reached out, groping. When he caught hold of her hands, still in their gloves, he shook them vigorously. "I've given you much trouble on both occasions. I'm so sorry. . . ."

Lu was stunned for a brief moment. Then she consoled him, looking at his bandaged face, "Never mind. Have a good rest. We'll take off the bandage in a few days."

After he was wheeled out, Lu glanced at the clock. A forty-minute operation had lasted an hour. She took off her white gown and rubber gloves and immediately donned another. As Lu turned to let the nurse tie the gown at the back, Jiang asked, "Shall we continue?"

"Yes."

14

"Let me do the next operation," Jiang begged. "You take a short rest, then do the third."

Lu shook her head and said smilingly, "I'll do it. You're not familiar with Wang Xiaoman. The child's scared stiff. We became friends during the last few days. Better leave her to me."

The girl did not come into the operating theatre on a wheeled stretcher, but was almost dragged in. In a white gown, which was a bit too large for her, she was reluctant to go anywhere near the operating-table.

"Aunt Lu, I'm scared. I don't want the operation. Please go and explain to my mother."

The sight of the doctors and nurses in such strange clothes terrified her. Her heart was pounding, as she tried to wrench away from the nurses, pleading with Lu for help.

Lu walked towards the table and coaxed her with a grin, "Come on, little girl. Didn't you promise to have this operation? Be

brave! There's nothing to fear. You won't feel any pain once you've been given some anaesthetic."

Xiaoman sized up Lu in her funny clothes and gazed at her kind, smiling, encouraging eyes. Then she climbed up on to the operating-table. A nurse spread a towel over her face. Lu motioned the nurse to tie up her hands. As the little patient was about to protest, Lu said, perching on the table, "Xiaoman, be a good girl! It's the same for all patients. Really, it won't take long." She gave her an injection of the anaesthetic while telling her, "I'm giving you an injection and soon your eye will feel nothing at all."

Lu was both doctor, devoted mother and kindergarten nurse. She took the scissors, forceps and other instruments which Jiang handed to her while keeping up a running commentary for the benefit of the girl. When she severed the straight muscle which caused the squint, Xiaoman's nerve was affected and she became nauseous.

"You feel a little sick?" Lu asked. "Take a deep breath. Just hold on for a minute. That's better. Still sick? Feeling any better? We'll finish the operation very soon. There's a good girl!"

Lu's words lulled Xiaoman into a trance while the operation continued. When she had been bandaged and wheeled out of the room, she remembered what her mother had told her to say, so she called out sweetly, "Thank you very much, aunty."

Everyone burst out laughing. The minute hand of the clock on the wall had just moved half an hour.

Lu was wet with sweat, the perspiration beading on her forehead, her underwear soaking. Wet patches showed under her armpits. She was surprised at this because it was not hot. Why had she perspired so profusely? She slightly moved her numb arms, which had ached from being raised for the duration of the operation.

When she removed the operating gown again and reached out for another, she suddenly felt dizzy. She closed her eyes for a minute, shook her head several times and then slowly eased one of her arms into a sleeve. A nurse came to help her tie the gown.

"Dr Lu!" the nurse exclaimed suddenly. "Your lips are so pale!"

Jiang, who was also changing, turned to look at Lu. "Goodness!" she said in astonishment. "You do look very pale!"

It was true. There were black rings under her eyes, even her lids were puffy. She looked a patient herself!

Seeing that Jiang's startled eyes remained fixed on her, Lu grinned and said, "Stop fussing! It'll soon be over."

She had no doubt that she could carry on with the next operation. Had she not worked like this for years?

"Shall we continue?" the nurse queried.

"Yes, of course."

How could they afford to stop? The donor's eye could not be stored too long, nor the operation be delayed. They had to go on working.

"Wenting," Jiang stepped over to Lu and suggested, "Let's have a break for half an hour."

Lu looked at the clock. It was just after ten. If they postponed it for half an hour, some colleagues would be late for lunch, while others had to rush home to prepare a meal for their children.

"Continue?" the nurse asked again.

"Yes."

15

Doctors of this and other hospitals who were undergoing further training thronged the door talking to Lu. They had got special permission to see her operate.

Uncle Zhang, helped by a nurse, clambered on to the operating-table, still talking and laughing. The table was a bit too small for him and his feet and hands dangled over the sides. He had a loud voice and talked incessantly, joking with a nurse, "Don't laugh at me, girl. If the medical team hadn't come to our village and persuaded me to have this operation, I'd rather die than let you cut my eye with a knife. Just imagine! A steel knife cutting into my flesh, ugh! Who knows if it will do me some good or not? Ha! Ha!..."

The young nurse giggled and said softly, "Uncle, lower your voice please."

"I know, lass. We must keep quiet in a hospital, mustn't we?" he still boomed. Gesticulating busily with one hand, he went on, "You can't imagine how I felt when I heard that my eye could be cured. I wanted to laugh and, at the same time, to cry. My father went blind in his old age and died a blind man. I never dreamed that a blind man like me could see the sun again. Times have really changed, haven't they?"

The nurse giggled while covering him with a towel. "Don't move again, uncle!" she said. "This towel's been sterilized, don't touch it."

"All right," he answered gravely. "Since I'm in hospital, I should obey the rules." But he was trying to raise his strong arms again.

Worrying about his restlessness, the nurse said, holding a strap, "I'll have to tie your arms to the table, uncle. That's the rule here."

Zhang was puzzled, but soon chortled. "Truss me up, eh?" he joked. "OK, go ahead! To be frank, lass, if it were not for my eyes, I wouldn't be so obedient. Though blind, I go to the fields twice a day. I was born a lively character. I like to be on the go. I just can't sit still."

This made the nurse laugh, and he himself chuckled too. But he stopped immediately when Lu entered. He asked, cocking up his ears, "Is that you, Dr Lu? I can recognize your steps. It's funny, since I lost my sight, my ears have grown sharp."

Seeing him full of beans, Lu could not help laughing. She took her seat, preparing for the operation. When she picked up the precious donor's cornea from a phial and sewed it on to a piece of gauze, he piped up again, "So an eye can be replaced? I never knew that!"

"It's not replacing the whole eye, just a filmy membrane," Jiang corrected him.

"Can't see the difference." He wasn't interested in details. With a sigh, he continued, "It needs much skill, doesn't it? When I return to my village with a pair of good eyes, the villagers'll say I must have met some kind fairy. Ha! Ha! I'll tell them I met Dr Lu!"

Jiang tittered, winking at Lu, who felt a little embarrassed. Still sewing, she explained, "Other doctors can do the same."

"That's quite true," he agreed. "You only find good doctors in this big hospital. No kidding!"

Her preparations over, Lu parted his eyelids with a speculum and said, "We'll start now. Just relax."

Zhang was not like other patients, who only listened to whatever the doctors said. He thought it impolite not to answer. So he said understandingly, "I'm perfectly all right. Go ahead. I don't mind if it's painful. Of course, it hurts to cut with a scalpel or a pair of scissors. But don't worry about me. I trust you. Besides. . ."

Jiang had to stop him, still smiling. "Uncle, don't talk any more." Finally he complied.

Lu picked up a trephine, small as a pen cap, and lightly cut out the opaque cornea. Cutting a similar disc of clear cornea from the donor's eye, she transferred it to Zhang's eye. Then she began the delicate task of stitching it with the needle-holder. The suture was finer than a hair.

The operation went smoothly. When she had finished, the transplanted cornea was perfectly fixed on the surface of the eye. But for some little black knots, one could never tell it was a new cornea.

"Well done!" the doctors around the operating-table quietly exclaimed in admiration.

Lu sighed with relief. Deeply touched, Jiang looked up at her friend with feeling. Silently, she put layers of gauze over Zhang's eye. . .

As he was wheeled out, Zhang seemed to awaken from a dream. He became animated again. When the wheeled stretcher was already out of the door, he cried out, "Thanks a lot, Dr Lu!"

The operations had ended. As Lu was pulling herself to her feet, she found her legs had gone to sleep. She simply could not stand up. After a little rest, she tried again and again, till she finally made it. There was a sudden pain in her side. She pressed it with her hand, not taking it seriously for it had occurred before. Engrossed in an operation, sitting on the little stool, for hours at

a time, she was aware of nothing else. But as soon as this operation had ended, she felt utterly exhausted, even too tired to move.

16

At that moment, Fu was cycling home in haste. He had not intended to return that day. Early that morning, Fu, at his wife's suggestion, had rolled up his bedding, put it on his bicycle carrier and taken it to his office to begin his new life.

By noon, however, he was wavering. Would Lu finish her operations in time? Imagining her dragging herself home to prepare lunch for the children, he suddenly felt a pang of guilt. So he jumped on his bicycle and pedalled home.

Just as he turned into their lane, he caught sight of his wife leaning against a wall, unable to move.

"Wenting! What's wrong?" he cried out, leaping off to help.

"Nothing. I'm just a bit tired." She put an arm round his shoulder and moved slowly towards home.

Fu noticed that she was very pale and that beads of cold sweat had broken out on her forehead.

He asked uneasily, "Shall I take you to hospital?"

She sat down on the edge of the bed, her eyes closed, and answered, "Don't worry. I'll be all right after a short rest."

She pointed to the bed, too weak to say anything. Fu took off her shoes and coat.

"Lie down and get some sleep. I'll wake you later."

"No need. I can't sleep. But lying down will help."

He went to boil some water in a saucepan. When he came back to fetch noodles, he heard her say, "We ought to have a rest. Shall we take the children to Beihai Park next Sunday? We haven't been there for more than ten years."

"Fine. I'm all for it!" Fu agreed, wondering why she should suddenly want to go there.

He gave her an anxious glance and went to cook the noodles. When he returned, food in hand, she had already fallen asleep.

He did not disturb her. When Yuanyuan came home, the two of them sat down to eat.

Just then, Lu began groaning. Fu put down his bowl and rushed to the bed. Lu was deathly white, her face covered in sweat.

"I can't fight it," she said in a feeble voice, gasping for breath.

Frightened, Fu took her hand asking, "What's wrong? Have you any pain?"

With a great effort, Lu pointed to her heart.

Panicking, Fu pulled open a drawer rummaging for a pain-killer. On second thoughts, he wondered if she needed a tranquillizer.

Though in great pain, she was clear-headed. She signed to him to calm down and said with all her remaining strength, "I must go to hospital!"

Only then did Fu realize the seriousness of her illness. For more than ten years she had never seen a doctor, though she went to the hospital every day. Now she was obviously critically ill. As he hurried out, he stopped at the door and turned to say, "I'll go and get a taxi."

He rushed to the public telephone on the corner. He dialled quickly and waited. When someone answered, he heard a cold voice saying, "No taxis at the moment."

"Look, I've got a very sick person here!"

"Still, you'll have to wait half an hour."

Fu began to plead, when the man rang off.

He tried to call Lu's hospital, but no one seemed to be in the office of the Ophthalmic Department. He asked the operator to put him through to the vehicle dispatch office.

"We can't send you a car without an official approval slip," was the answer.

Where on earth could he track down the hospital leaders to get an approval slip?

"But this is urgent! Hello!" he shouted into the receiver. But the line had already gone dead.

He phoned the political department which, he thought, ought to help him out. After a long time, a woman picked up the receiver. She listened patiently and said politely, "Would you please contact the administration department?"

He had to ask the operator to put him through to the administration department. Recognizing his voice, the operator demanded impatiently, "Where exactly do you want?"

Where? He was not sure himself. In a begging voice, he said he wanted to speak to anyone in the administration department. The telephone rang and rang. Nobody answered.

Disappointed, Fu abandoned the idea of finding a car. He headed for a small workshop in the lane making cardboard boxes, hoping to borrow a tricycle and trailer. The old lady in charge, hearing of his predicament, sympathized with him, but unfortunately could do nothing, for both her tricycles were out.

What was to be done? Standing in the alley, Fu was desperate. Sit Lu on the bicycle carrier? That was impossible.

Just then, Fu saw a van coming. Without much thought, he raised his hand to stop it.

The van came to a halt, and the driver poked his head out, staring in surprise. But when he heard what was happening, he beckoned Fu to get into the van.

They went straight to Fu's home. When the driver saw Lu being dragged towards the van supported by her husband, he hurried to help her get into the cabin. Then slowly he drove her to the casualty department of the hospital.

17

She had never slept so long, never felt so tired. She felt pain all over her body as if she had just fallen from a cloud. She had not the slightest bit of strength left. After a peaceful sleep, her limbs were more relaxed, her heart calmer. But she felt her mind go blank.

For years, she had simply had no time to pause, to reflect on the hardships she had experienced or the difficulties lying ahead. Now all physical and mental burdens had been lifted. She seemed to have plenty of time to examine her past and to explore the future. But her mind had switched off; no reminiscences, no hopes. Nothing.

Perhaps it was only a dream. She had had such dreams before. . .

One evening when she was only five, a north wind had been howling. Her mother had gone out, leaving her alone at home. Soon it was very dark and her mother had not returned. For the first time, Lu felt lonely, terrified. She cried and shouted, "Mama . . . mama . . ." This scene often appeared later in her dreams. The howling wind, the door blown open by a sudden gust and the pale kerosene lamp remained vividly in her mind. For a long time, she could not tell whether it had been true or a dream.

This time, it was not a dream but reality.

She was in bed, ill, and Jiajie was attending her. He looked flaked out too. He was dozing, half lying on the bed. He would catch cold if not awakened. She tried to call him, but no sound came out of her mouth. There was a lump in her throat choking her. She wanted to pull a coat over him, but her arms did not seem to belong to her.

She glanced round and saw she was in a single room. Only serious cases were given such special treatment. She was suddenly seized by fear. "Am I . . . ?"

The autumn wind rattled the door and windows. Darkness gathered, swallowing up the room. Lu felt clearer after a cold sweat. It was real, she knew, not a dream. This was the end of life, the beginning of death!

So this was dying, no fear, no pain, just life withering away, the senses blurring, slowly sinking, like a leaf drifting on a river.

All came to an end, inevitably. Rolling waves swept over her chest. Lu felt she was floating in the water. . .

"Mama . . . mama . . ."

She heard Xiaoja's call and saw her running along the bank. She turned back, reaching out her arms.

"Xiaoja . . . my darling daughter. . ."

But waves swept her away, and Xiaoja's face grew vague, her hoarse voice turned into sobbing.

"Mama . . . plait my hair. . ."

Why not plait her hair? The child had been in this world for six years, and her one desire was to have pigtailed. Whenever she saw other girls with pigtailed adorned with silk ribbons, admiration overwhelmed her little heart. But such requests were ignored.

Mother had no time for that. On Monday morning, the hospital was crowded with patients and, for Lu, every minute counted.

"Mama . . . mama . . ."

She heard Yuanyuan's calling and saw the boy running after her along the bank. She turned back, stretching out her arms.

"Yuanyuan . . . Yuanyuan . . ."

A wave swept over her. When she struggled to the surface, there was no sign of her son, only his voice in the distance.

"Mama . . . don't forget . . . my white gym shoes . . ."

A kaleidoscope of sports shoes whirled around. White and blue sneakers, sports boots, gym shoes, white shoes with red or blue bands. Buy a pair for Yuanyuan, whose shoes were already worn out. Buy a pair of white gym shoes and he would be in raptures for a month. But then the shoes disappeared and raining down were price tags: 3.1 yuan, 4.5 yuan, 6.3 yuan . . .

Now she saw Jiajie chasing after her, his running figure mirrored in the water. He was in a great hurry, his voice trembling as he called, "Wenting, you can't leave us like this!"

How she wished that she could wait for him! He held out his hand to her, but the ruthless current raced forward and she drifted away helplessly.

"Dr Lu . . . Dr Lu . . ."

So many people were calling her, lining the banks. Yafen, Old Liu, Director Zhao, Dr Sun, all in white coats; Jiao Chengsi, Uncle Zhang and Wang Xiaoman in pyjamas. Among the other patients, she only recognized a few. They were all calling her.

I oughtn't to leave. No! There are so many things I still have to do. Xiaojia and Yuanyuan shouldn't be motherless. I mustn't bring Jiajie more sorrow. He can't afford to lose his wife so young. I can't tear myself away from the hospital, the patients. Oh no! I can't give up this miserable, yet dear life!

I won't drown! I must fight! I must remain in the world. But why am I so tired? I've no strength to resist, to struggle. I'm sinking, sinking . . .

Ah! Goodbye, Yuanyuan! Goodbye, Xiaojia! Will you miss your mother? In this last moment of my life, I love you more than ever. Oh, how I love you! Let me embrace you. Listen,

my darlings, forgive your mummy who did not give you the love you deserved. Forgive your mummy who, time and again, refrained from hugging you, pushing away your smiling faces. Forgive your mummy for leaving you while you're still so small.

Goodbye, Jiajie! You gave up everything for me! Without you, I couldn't have achieved anything. Without you, life had no meaning. Ah, you sacrificed so much for me! If I could, I would kneel down before you begging your pardon since I can never repay all your kindness and concern. Forgive me for neglecting you. I often thought I should do something more for you. I wanted to end my work regularly and prepare supper for you. I wanted to let you have the desk, hoping you would finish your article. But it's too late! How sad! I've no time now.

Goodbye, my patients! For the past eighteen years, my life was devoted to you. Whether I walked, sat or lay down, I thought only of you and your eyes! You don't know the joy I felt after curing an eye. What a pity I shall no longer feel that . . .

18

"Arrhythmia!" the doctor monitoring the screen exclaimed.

"Wenting! Wenting!" Fu cried out, fixing his eyes on his wife, who was struggling for breath.

The doctors and nurses on duty rushed into the room.

"Intravenous injection of lidocaine!" the doctor snapped an order.

A nurse quickly injected it, but before it was finished, Lu's lips went blue, her hands clenched, her eyes rolled upwards.

Her heart stopped beating.

The doctors began massage resuscitation. A respirator was applied to her head, which made a rhythmic sound. Then a defibrillator went into operation. When her chest was struck by this, her heart began to beat again.

"Get the ice cap ready!" the doctor in charge ordered, the sweat on his forehead.

An ice cap was put on Lu's head.

The pale dawn could be seen outside the window. Day had broken at last. Lu had lived through a crucial night. She now entered a new day.

A day nurse came into the room and opened the windows, letting in fresh air and the birds' merry singing. At once the pungent smell of medicine and death were dispelled. Dawn brought new hope to a frail life.

Another nurse came to take Lu's temperature, while a medical orderly brought in breakfast. Then the doctor on duty dropped in on his ward round.

Wang Xiaoman, still bandaged, pleaded with a nurse, "Let me have a look at Dr Lu! Just one peep."

"No. She nearly died last night. No one's allowed to see her for the time being."

"Aunt, perhaps you don't know, but she fell ill because she operated on me. Please let me go and see her. I promise not to say a word to her."

"No, no, no!" The nurse scowled.

"Oh please! Just one glance." Xiaoman was close to tears. Hearing footsteps behind her, she turned and saw Old Zhang coming, led by his grandson.

"Grandpa," she rushed to him, "will you have a word with this aunt? She won't let me..."

Zhang, with his eyes bandaged, was dragged over by the little girl to the nurse.

"Sister, do let us have a look at her."

Now with this old man pestering her too, the nurse flared up, "What's the matter with you people, fooling about in the wards?"

"Come off it! Don't you understand?" Zhang's voice was not so loud today. He went on humbly, "We've a good reason, you know. Why is Dr Lu ill? Because she operated on us. To be frank, I can't really see her, but to stand beside her bed for a while will calm my nerves."

He was so sincere that the nurse softened and explained patiently, "It's not that I'm being mean. Dr Lu's seriously ill with heart

trouble. She mustn't be excited. You want her to recover very soon, don't you? Better not disturb her at the moment."

"Yes, you're quite right." Zhang sighed and sat down on a bench. Slapping his thigh, he said regretfully, "It's all my fault. I urged her to do the operation as quickly as possible. But who would've thought...? What shall I do if anything happens to her?" He lowered his head in remorse.

Dr Sun hurried to see Lu too before starting his work, but was stopped by Xiaoman.

"Dr Sun, are you going to see Dr Lu?" she asked.

He nodded.

"Will you take me along? Please."

"Not now. Some time later. OK?"

Hearing Sun's voice, Zhang stood up and reached out for him. Tugging Sun's sleeve, he said, "Dr Sun. We'll do as you say. But can I have a word with you? I know you're extremely busy. But I still want you to listen to what's been bothering me."

Sun patted Zhang on the shoulder and said, "Go ahead."

"Dr Lu's a very good doctor. You leaders ought to do your best to cure her. If you save her, she can save many others. There are good medicines, aren't there? Give her them. Don't hesitate. I hear you have to pay for certain precious medicines. Lu's got two children. She's not well off. Now she's ill. I don't expect she can afford them. Can't this big hospital subsidize her?"

He stopped, holding Sun's hands, slightly cocking his ear towards him, waiting for his answer.

Sun had a one-track mind. He never showed his feelings. But today he was moved. Shaking Zhang's hands, he said emotionally, "We'll do everything possible to save her!"

Zhang seemed satisfied. He called his grandson to come nearer, and groped for a satchel which was slung across the boy's shoulder.

"Here are some eggs. Please take them to her when you go in."

"It's not necessary," Sun replied quickly.

This put Zhang's back up instantly. Gripping Sun's hands, he raised his voice, "If you don't take them to her, I won't let you go!"

Sun had to accept the satchel of eggs. He decided to ask a nurse

to return it and explain later. As though guessing what was in Sun's mind, Zhang continued, "And don't ask someone to bring them back."

Forced to acquiesce, Sun helped Zhang and Xiaoman down the stairs.

Qin, accompanied by Director Zhao, approached Lu's room. "Zhao," the woman talked while walking, rather excitedly, "I was like a bureaucrat. I didn't know it was Dr Lu who had operated on Old Jiao. But you should have known, shouldn't you? Luckily Jiao recognized Lu. Otherwise we'd still be in the dark."

"I was sent to work in the countryside at that time," Zhao replied helplessly.

Shortly after they had entered the room, Sun arrived. The doctor on duty gave a brief report of the emergency measures taken to save Lu the previous night. Zhao looked over the case-history, nodding. Then he said, "We must watch her carefully."

Fu, seeing so many people entering, had stood up. But Qin, unaware of his presence, quickly sat down on the vacant stool.

"Feeling better, Dr Lu?" she asked.

Lu's eyes opened slightly but she said nothing.

"Vice-minister Jiao has told me all about you," Qin said warmly. "He's very grateful to you. He would have come himself if I hadn't stopped him. I'm here to thank you on his behalf. Anything you fancy eating, anything you want, let me know. I can help you. Don't stand on ceremony. We're all revolutionary comrades."

Lu closed her eyes.

"You're still young. Be optimistic. Since you're sick, it's better to accept it. This..."

Zhao stopped her by saying, "Comrade Qin Bo, let her have some rest. She's only just regained consciousness."

"Fine, fine. Have a good rest," Qin said, rising to her feet. "I'll come again in a couple of days."

Out of the ward, Qin complained frowning, "Director Zhao, I must give you a piece of my mind. Dr Lu's a real treasure. If you had been more concerned about her, she wouldn't have become

so ill. The middle-aged comrades are the backbone of our country. It's imperative to value talented people."

"Right," was Zhao's reply.

Gazing after her receding figure, Fu asked Sun in a small voice, "Who's she?"

Sun looked over the frame of his spectacles at the doorway and answered frowning, "An old lady spouting revolutionary phrases!"

20

That day, Lu was slightly better and could open her eyes easily. She drank two spoonfuls of milk and a sip of orange juice. But she lay with her eyes blank, staring at the ceiling. She wore a vacant expression, as if indifferent to everything, including her own critical condition and the unhappiness of her family. She seemed weary of life.

Fu stared at her in mute horror for he had never seen her like this before. He called her again and again, but she only responded with a slight wave of her hand, as though not wishing to be disturbed. Probably she felt comfortable letting her mind remain suspended.

Time passed unheeded. Fu, sitting at her bedside, had not slept for two nights. He felt exhausted. Dozing, he was suddenly awoken by a heart-rending scream, which shook the whole ward. He heard a girl wailing next door, "Mama! Mama!" and a man's sobbing. Then there came the sound of footsteps as many people rushed to the room. Fu hurried out too. He saw a wheeled stretcher being pushed out of the room, on which lay a corpse covered with a sheet. Then the nurse in white pushing the stretcher appeared. A girl of sixteen with dishevelled hair stumbled out, shaking, and threw herself at the stretcher. Clutching at it with trembling hands, she pleaded, tears streaming down her cheeks, "Don't take it away! Please! My mother's asleep. She'll soon wake up! I know she will!"

Visitors made way for the wheeled stretcher. In silence, they paid their respects to the deceased.

Fu stood rooted amid the crowd. His cheekbones stuck out prominently in his haggard face. His blood-shot eyes began to fill with tears. Clenching his fists, he tried to pull himself together, but shook all over. Unnerved by the girl's shrill cries, he wanted to cover his ears.

"Mama, wake up! Wake up! They're taking you away!" the girl screamed madly. Had she not been held back by others, she would have pulled off the sheet. The middle-aged man following the stretcher repeated, sobbing, "I've let you down! I've let you down!"

His desperate cries were like a knife piercing Fu's heart, as he stared at the stretcher. All of a sudden, as if electrified, he dashed towards his wife's room. He went straight to her, threw himself on the bed. He murmured with closed eyes, "You're alive!"

Lu stirred, awakened by his heavy breathing. She opened her eyes and looked at him, but her eyes didn't seem to focus.

He felt a shiver of fear and cried out, "Wenting!"

Her eyes lingered on his face coldly, and this made his heart bleed. Fu did not know what to say or do to encourage her to hold on to life. This was his wife, the dearest person in the world. How long ago was it since he had read poems to her in Beihai Park that winter? During all these years, she had always been his beloved. Life would be unthinkable without her! He must keep her with him!

Poetry! Read a poem to her as he had done then! It was poetry which had helped him to win her before! Today, he would recite the same poem to remind her of sweet memories, to give her the courage to live on.

Half-kneeling beside her bed, he began to recite with tears in his eyes:

"I wish I were a rapid stream,
.....
If my love
A tiny fish would be,
She'd frolic
In my foaming waves."



The verses seemed to have touched her. She turned her head towards him, her lips moving slightly. Fu leaned over and listened to her indistinct words: "I can no longer . . . swim. . ."

Choking back his tears, he continued:

"I wish I were a deserted forest,
.....
If my love
A little bird would be,
She'd nest and twitter
In my dense trees."

She murmured softly, "I can no longer . . . fly. . ."

His heart ached. Steeling himself, he went on, in tears:

"I wish I were a crumbling ruin,
.....
If my love
Green ivy would be,
She'd tenderly entwine
Around my lonely head."

Tears, blinding tears silently poured down her cheeks and fell on the white pillow. With an effort, she said, "I can't . . . climb up!"

Fu threw himself on to her, weeping bitterly. "I've failed you as a husband. . ."

When he opened his tearful eyes, he was astonished. Again she remained with her eyes fixed on the ceiling. She seemed unaware of his weeping, his appeals, unaware of everything around her.

On hearing Fu's sobbing, a doctor hurried in and said to him, "Dr Lu's very weak. Please don't excite her."

Fu said nothing more the whole afternoon. At dusk, Lu seemed a little better. She turned her head to Fu and her lips moved as if wanting to speak.

"Wenting, what do you want to say? Tell me," Fu asked, holding her hands.

She spoke at last, "Buy Yuanyuan . . . a pair of white gym shoes. . ."

"I'll do it tomorrow," he replied, unable to check his tears. But he quickly wiped them away with the back of his hand.

Lu, still watching him, seemed to have more to say. But she only uttered a few words after a long time, "Plait . . . Xiaoja's hair. . ."

"Yes, I will!" Fu promised, still sobbing. He looked at his wife, his vision blurred, hoping she would be able to tell him all that was worrying her. But she closed her lips, as if she had used up her energy.

21

Two days later, a letter came for Lu, posted at Beijing International Airport. Fu opened it and read:

Dear Wenting,

I wonder if you will ever receive this letter. It's not impossible that this won't reach you. But I hope not! I don't believe it will happen. Though you're very ill, I believe you'll recover. You can still do a lot. You're too young to leave us!

When my husband and I came to say goodbye to you last night, you were still unconscious. We'd wanted to see you this morning, but there were too many things to do. Yesterday evening may be the last time we will meet. Thinking of this, my heart breaks. We've been studying and working together for more than twenty years. No one understands us as well as we do each other. Who would imagine we would part like this?

I'm now writing this letter in the airport. Can you guess where I'm standing at this moment? At the arts and crafts counter on the second floor. There's no one about, only the shining glass counter in front of me. Remember the first time we travelled by air, we came here too? There was a pot of artificial narcissuses with dew on their petals, so lifelike, so exquisite! You told me that you liked it best. But when we looked at the price, we were scared off. Now, I'm before

the counter again, alone, looking at another pot, almost the same colour as the one we saw. Looking at it, I feel like crying. I don't know why. Now I realize suddenly, it's because all that has gone.

When Fu had just got to know you, I remember once he came to our room and recited a line by Pushkin, "All that has happened in the past becomes a sweet memory." I pursed my lips and said it wasn't true. I even asked, "Can past misfortunes become sweet memories?" Fu grinned, ignoring me. He must have thought inwardly that I knew nothing about poetry. But today I understand. Pushkin was right. It exactly reflects my mood now. It's as if he wrote the line for me! I really feel that all the past is sweet.

A jet has just taken off, its engines roaring. Where is it going? In an hour, I'll be climbing up the steps into the plane, leaving my country. With only sixty minutes to go, I can't help weeping, and my tears wet this letter. But I've no time to re-write it.

I'm so depressed, I suddenly feel as if I've made the wrong decision. I don't want to leave everything here. No! I can't bear to leave our hospital, our operating theatre, even that little desk in the clinic! I often grumbled that Dr Sun was too severe, never forgiving a mistake. But now I wish I could hear his criticism again. He was a strict teacher. If not for him, I wouldn't be so skilled!

The loudspeakers have just wished passengers bon voyage. Will mine be good? Thinking of boarding the plane in a moment, I feel lost. Where will I land? What lies in store? My heart's in my boots. I'm scared! Yes, scared stiff! Will we get used to a strange country, which is so different from ours? How can my mind be at peace?

My husband's sitting in an armchair brooding. Busy packing the last few days, he had no time to think. He seemed quite firm about the decision. But last night, when he stuffed the last coat into the suitcase, he said all of a sudden, "We'll be homeless from tomorrow!" He's not spoken since then, and I know his mind is still divided.

Yaya was most happy about this trip. She was nervous and excited, and sometimes I felt like hitting her. But now she's standing at the glass door watching the planes landing and taking off, as if reluctant to leave.

"Won't you change your minds?" you asked that night when we were at your place.

I can't answer that question in one sentence. Liu and I have been discussing it almost every day for the past few months. Our minds have been in a turmoil. There are many reasons, of course, urging us to leave China. It is for Yaya, for Liu and myself. However, none of those reasons can lessen my pain. We shouldn't leave, when China has just begun a new period. We've no excuse for avoiding our duties.

Compared with you, I'm a weaker character. Though I had less trouble than you in the past ten years, I couldn't bear it as you did. I often burst out when viciously slandered and attacked. I wasn't stronger than you. On the contrary, it shows my weakness. Better to die than be humiliated, I thought. But there was Yaya. It was surprising that I was able to brazen it out in those days, when Liu was illegally detained as an "enemy agent".

All these are bitter memories of the past. Fu was right in saying, "Darkness has receded, and day has dawned." The trouble is, the evil influence of many years can't be eradicated overnight. The policies of the government take a long time to reach the people. Resentment is not easily removed. Rumours can kill a person. I dread such a nightmare. I lack your courage!

I remember that you and I were cited at that meeting as bourgeois specialists. When we left the hospital afterwards, I said to you, "I can't understand all this. Why should people who have worked hard in their field be crushed? I'll refuse to attend such meetings as a protest!" But you said, "Forget it! If they want to hold a hundred such meetings, let them. I'll attend. We'll still have to do the operations. I'll study at home." I asked you, "Don't you feel wronged?" You smiled and said, "I'm so busy, I've no time to care." I

admired you very much. Before we parted, you warned me, "Don't tell Fu about such things. He's in enough trouble himself." We walked a block in silence. I noticed that you looked very calm, very confident. No one could shake your faith. I knew that you had a strong will, which enabled you to resist all kinds of attacks and go your own way. If I had half your courage and will-power, I wouldn't have made such a decision.

Forgive me! This is all I can say to you now. I'm leaving, but I'm leaving my heart with you, with my dear homeland. Wherever I go, I'll never forget China. Believe me! Believe that I'll return. After a few years, when Yaya's grown up and we have achieved something in medicine, we'll come back.

I hope you'll soon recover! Learn a lesson from your illness and pay more attention to your health. I'm not advising you to be selfish. I've always admired your selflessness. I wish you good health to make full use of your talents!

Goodbye, my dearest friend!

Affectionately,
Yafen

22

A month and a half later, Dr Lu had basically recovered and was permitted to go home.

It was a miracle. Ill as she was, Lu, several times on the brink of death, survived. The doctors were greatly surprised and delighted.

That morning, Fu jubilantly helped her put on a cotton-padded jacket, a pair of woollen trousers, a blue overcoat, and wrapped around her neck a long fluffy beige scarf.

"How are things at home?" she asked.

"Fine. The comrades of your Party branch came yesterday to help clean the room."

Her thoughts immediately turned to that small room with the

large bookcase covered with a white cloth, the little alarm-clock on the window-sill and the desk. . . .

She felt feeble and cold, though so warmly dressed. Her legs trembled when she stood up. With one hand gripping her husband's arm, the other touching the wall, she moved forward leaning heavily on Fu. Slowly, she walked out of the ward.

Zhao, Sun and her other colleagues followed her, watching her progress along the corridor towards the gate.

It had rained for a couple of days. A gust of wind sighed through the bare branches of the trees. The sunshine, extraordinarily bright after the rain, slanted in through the windows of the corridor. The cold wind blew in too. Slowly Fu, supporting his wife, headed for the sunlight and the wind.

A black car was waiting at the steps. It had been sent by the administration department at Zhao's request.

Leaning on her husband's shoulder, Lu walked slowly towards the gate. . . .

Illustrated by Yu Qibui

Gladys Yang

A New Woman Writer Shen Rong and Her Story "At Middle Age"

THERE is still a dearth of good new novels in China, but in 1979 more novelettes appeared than in any previous year since Liberation. Better fitted than short stories to introduce a wide range of characters and explore a subject in depth, they have proved popular. Some deal with different aspects of the Cultural Revolution; others, now arousing more interest, with social problems since the fall of the "gang of four". "At Middle Age", published in January this year in the Shanghai bi-monthly *Harvest*, is one of these.

The concept of age is relative. In the early fifties, I translated a story about village life in which one peasant was constantly referred to as the "old man" or "old fellow". He was only thirty-nine but nearly decrepit, owing to back-breaking toil and malnutrition. In the West, the threshold of old age has been pushed back, but Chinese consider thirty-five as the start of middle age. And, like most professionals of her generation, Dr Lu has aged prematurely.

Gladys Yang is on the staff of *Chinese Literature*.



The writer Shen Rong

Today's "middle-aged" intellectuals were educated after Liberation. Brought up in a time of great revolutionary enthusiasm, by and large they had high ideals and studied hard to equip themselves to serve the people well. They work long hours, often under poor conditions, and their sole holidays are a few festivals. Whereas the position of the workers and peasants has improved vastly since Liberation, the new intellectuals' salary is still very low. Living quarters in China's big cities are fearfully cramped, and in this respect intellectuals are worse off than peasants.

It is true that prices in China are relatively low. Professionals have security as well as free medical attention. Still, they are on a very tight budget. And in the absence of labour-saving devices, housework is wearisome and time-consuming, as is child-minding and queueing for vegetables. After doing a day's hard work as well as the household chores, it requires real dedication to sit down at night and study to keep abreast with developments in your own field. It is admirable how many intellectuals make this effort day after day. But inevitably this takes a toll of their health.

During the Cultural Revolution, to be an intellectual was to be suspect. Many had their homes raided, their books seized and burnt. There had previously been Eight Categories of Bad Characters: landlords, rich peasants, reactionaries, criminals, Rightists, renegades, spies and capitalist-roaders. Now the intellectuals were labelled Stinking Number Nine, ignominiously assigned to the bottom of this list. Some were given menial tasks, such as cleaning out lavatories. Others were sent to the countryside, unable for years to use their special skills.

In 1976, the arrest of the "gang of four" elated intellectuals. Surely, spring had come back to China! Only later did we gain some idea of the havoc that had been caused and the problems resulting from the wrecking of the economy, the tremendous wastage of talent, the spread of bureaucracy. . . . Chinese woke up to the fact that they had fallen years behind and must catch up, must modernize the country.

The older cadres are doing their best, valiantly working on long after they should have retired; but their strength is failing. The younger college graduates or technicians in their twenties or early thirties often speak of themselves as the "lost generation". Their education was totally disrupted by the Cultural Revolution, and however hard they try to study now it is difficult to make up for those lost years. They will make their contribution eventually, but it will take time for them to become proficient.

That is why the middle-aged professionals have the key role to play in China's modernization. They have taken up this heavy responsibility, overworking and sacrificing their health, considering themselves as expendable. The old experts have been honoured, given public recognition; but there is not enough recognition of the great contribution made by the middle-aged, which is out of all proportion to the meagre remuneration they receive. Shen Rong is one of the first writers to have called attention to this serious problem. Her readers' reaction is: Society should devote as much care to safeguarding the middle-aged professionals as Dr Lu devotes to curing her patients.

Shen Rong, a native of Wushan County in Sichuan, was born in 1935. Like Dr Lu, she did not have a "good class origin".

Her parents were neither workers, peasants nor revolutionaries, her father being a judge in the Beiping Court of the Kuomintang's Supreme Court, her mother a teacher and an amateur artist.

After Liberation, at the age of fifteen, stirred by the revolutionary changes around her, she left junior middle school after only one year to be a salesgirl in a bookshop set up for workers. "We were full of enthusiasm," she recalls. "We youngsters, with packs of books on our backs, marched along the banks of the Jialing River to mines and factories. I remember a woman worker who ordered a copy of our magazine *Learn Culture*. 'I can't read yet,' she said, 'but I'm buying this because our Party has liberated us and wants us to study.' . . . This experience was a class education for me."

In '52, Shen Rong transferred to the *Southwest Workers' Daily* in Chongqing. During the next two years she studied Russian by following broadcast lessons, doing so well that in '54 she was admitted to the Russian Language Institute in Beijing. Just before graduation she married a journalist.

In '57 she started work as a translator in the Radio Station. She drove herself too hard, and in '63 started having dizzy spells and fell seriously ill. She went to a people's commune in Shanxi to convalesce, and stayed in the home of a woman brigade leader. When she talks about village cadres, her face lights up. She considers them the salt of the earth. In '64 she returned to Beijing. Not yet fit enough to go back to her job, she did some writing and painting. Her first works were plays, and one was being rehearsed when the start of the Cultural Revolution quashed it.

Between '69 and '73, when most cadres were sent down to the country, she went with her colleagues to Tongxian. There, again, she lived with a peasant family and joined in the field work. "I got the highest work-points allocated for transplanting rice shoots," she told me. "It was hard. When the others knocked off I went on working, as otherwise I couldn't have finished my quota. But I enjoyed it. And that work improved my health. Then I joined a team which went from village to village explaining the Party's policies at that time. We were called in to settle

all kinds of disputes. It was a rare chance to get to know the peasants."

In Tongxian she finished writing her first novel *Perpetual Youth*, published in '75. In '76 she went to Anhui to collect material for her second novel *Light and Dark*, published in '78. She took her little daughter and younger son, but left her elder son behind.

"Do you feel, like Dr Lu, that you've been a bad wife and mother?" I asked.

"Yes, I do. Like Dr Lu, I feel we must make sacrifices to get work done."

She has also written two other novelettes, *Eternal Spring* and *White Snow*.

Shen Rong is reluctant to talk about herself. "There was nothing remarkable about my youth," she says. However, it is clear that she has remarkable application, tenacity and powers of observation.

The problems of middle-aged professionals were in her mind for some time. I asked why she decided to make her central characters doctors instead of, say, schoolteachers who also perform a vital social service and are desperately overworked and underpaid. She said it was because doctors cure the sick and come into contact with people of all walks of life. She familiarized herself with Tongren Hospital in Beijing. "The sacrifices our middle-aged professionals make are no less than those made on the Long March," she told me vehemently.

Dr Lu is refreshingly different from the general run of heroines in Chinese writing. She is typical of the first generation of professionals trained in New China, expressing her patriotism by means of hard work and expecting little reward. To make the best possible contribution to the country, she even neglects her children — she has no time to plait her small daughter's hair. Outwardly so mild, she has iron determination, a high sense of responsibility, great technical skill and a thoroughly humanitarian attitude to her patients, showing the same concern for an old peasant as for a high official.

I asked Shen Rong, "Is Dr Lu typical, or have you idealized her?"

"She is typical," was the immediate reply.

I told her I personally disliked the meekness with which Dr Lu puts up with the insinuations and arrogant officiousness of Qin Bo, Vice-minister Jiao's wife. To me this smacked of the Christian exhortation to turn the other cheek.

"No," Shen Rong said. "It's because she has more important things on her mind. And, as Lu Xun wrote, 'The highest contempt is wordless.'"

The relationship between Dr Lu and her husband is tender and comradely. Indeed, this story should be read by members of the Women's Liberation Movement who wonder why there is no feminist movement in China. Chinese men do not stand in the way of their wives' careers, and they help with the housework and children. Men and women share the same problems. Many Westerners think the Chinese an inscrutable people who conceal their feelings, but most writers in China today are more akin to Dickens than to his hard-boiled 20th-century successors in their unabashed display of emotion. Thus Shen Rong evokes the poetry in Dr Lu's austere life by quoting the Hungarian poet Petöfi.

Qin Bo is brilliantly drawn, a perfect foil to unassuming, admirable Dr Lu. At first she strikes us as an experienced old cadre, principled, concerned for others and conscientious. Her costume of good material is plain but well cut, her hair dyed and stylishly waved. She keeps mouthing Marxist precepts, but on her lips they are empty platitudes. We soon realize that she judges other people by their titles, status and appearances. She expects, because of her husband's high position, to receive privileged treatment. China is plagued with too many old "revolutionaries" of this kind who no longer have any revolutionary feeling. Entrenched in leading positions, they do no useful work and make things difficult for other people. We cannot ascribe Dr Lu's heart attack to Qin Bo's harassment, but undoubtedly it was a contributing factor.

Two controversial characters in this story are Dr Jiang and her husband, who are leaving for Canada. In addition to the

hard conditions of intellectuals, they have had to put up with political discrimination on account of their connections overseas. When the ultra-Left line prevailed, many patriotic overseas Chinese who had come back to China to help build up the country were treated as suspects, as second-class citizens. Now that the government has relaxed the restrictions on emigration, a number of well-qualified doctors have left. Dr Jiang and her husband, after a mental struggle, feeling rather guilty about it, decide to leave. Today, when this country is desperately short of trained personnel, a brain drain is deplorable. Some readers have therefore criticized Shen Rong for portraying this couple so sympathetically. When I asked her about this she defended her stand, and also said that most readers side with her. She wanted to highlight the shocking living conditions which make patriotic professionals go abroad in the hope of giving their children a better education and of coming back, later on, better qualified themselves.

"How can it be solved, this problem of the middle-aged?" I asked. "Surely China just doesn't have the funds or the housing to improve their living conditions much in the near future."

"I can't give you any solution. But the Central Party Committee has issued certain directives calling on administrative heads to show more concern for this group of low-paid technical personnel. In my story I simply tried to draw public attention to their predicament, and to pay my tribute to them." Then she told me that the newspaper *Health* had published an article urging the heads of the Ministry of Health to read this story.

Wang Ruilin

Yan Han, the Woodcut Artist

IN the early thirties, encouraged by the great writer Lu Xun, modern woodcuts became an important art form in contemporary Chinese art. As a result, many talented woodcut artists like Yan Han appeared. Now over sixty, he has been a woodcut artist for over forty years, producing more than eight hundred works reflecting the revolutionary struggles of the Chinese people.

Born into a poor family in 1916 in Donghai County, northern Jiangsu, Yan Han had a wretched childhood. His father, with odd jobs, supported his family of four children. It was only by borrowing money and with the help of friends that Yan Han was able to attend an old-fashioned private school in his village. Though he had loved to paint as a child, it was in junior middle school that he had his first formal art lessons. However, Yan Han did not plan to be an artist. He intended to enter a teachers' training college and qualify as a teacher as soon as possible to help his father support the family.

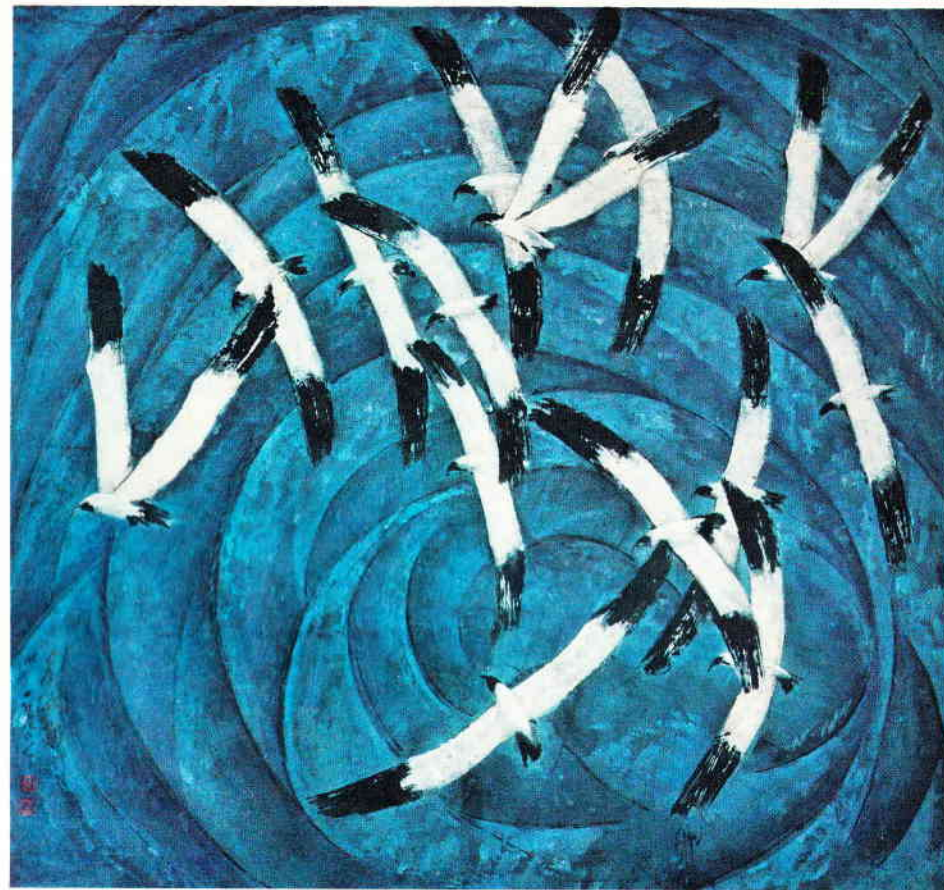
Wang Ruilin is an art editor of Chinese Literature.



Yan Han

In 1931 Japan occupied the three northeastern provinces. Yan Han was expelled from school because he openly opposed the Kuomintang's policy of non-resistance to Japanese aggression. In 1935 with the help of his uncle, Yan Han entered Hangzhou Art Academy, then one of the best art institutions in China. On its staff were many famous professors like its president Lin Fengmian and Pan Tianshou, who specialized in traditional Chinese painting. He studied very hard and received a systematic training in both Chinese and western art, which broadened his vision.

In the summer of 1938, the second year after the outbreak of the War of Resistance Against Japan, Yan Han and several fellow students left for Yanan and entered the Lu Xun Art Academy. Upon graduation in the winter of that year, he joined the Lu Xun Woodcut Group organized by the academy. Then, with the Eighth Route Army, he worked in the base area in Shanxi's Taihang Mountains. He produced many woodcut leaflets, posters and serial pictures in the intervals between the battles. In 1939 Zhu De, the commander of the Eighth Route Army, sponsored a conference of literary and art workers in the Taihang Mountains, at which he pointed out that art must be a weapon to oppose the

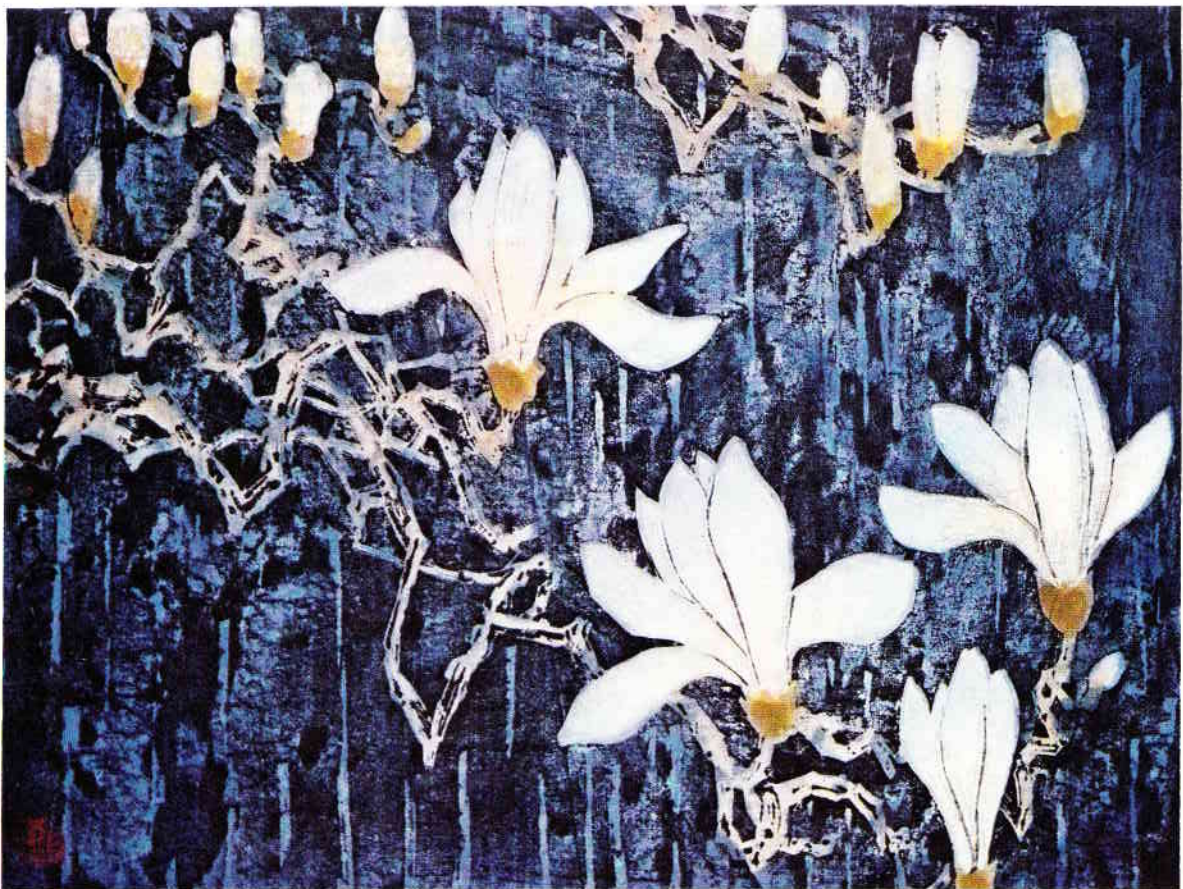


Seagulls (traditional Chinese painting)

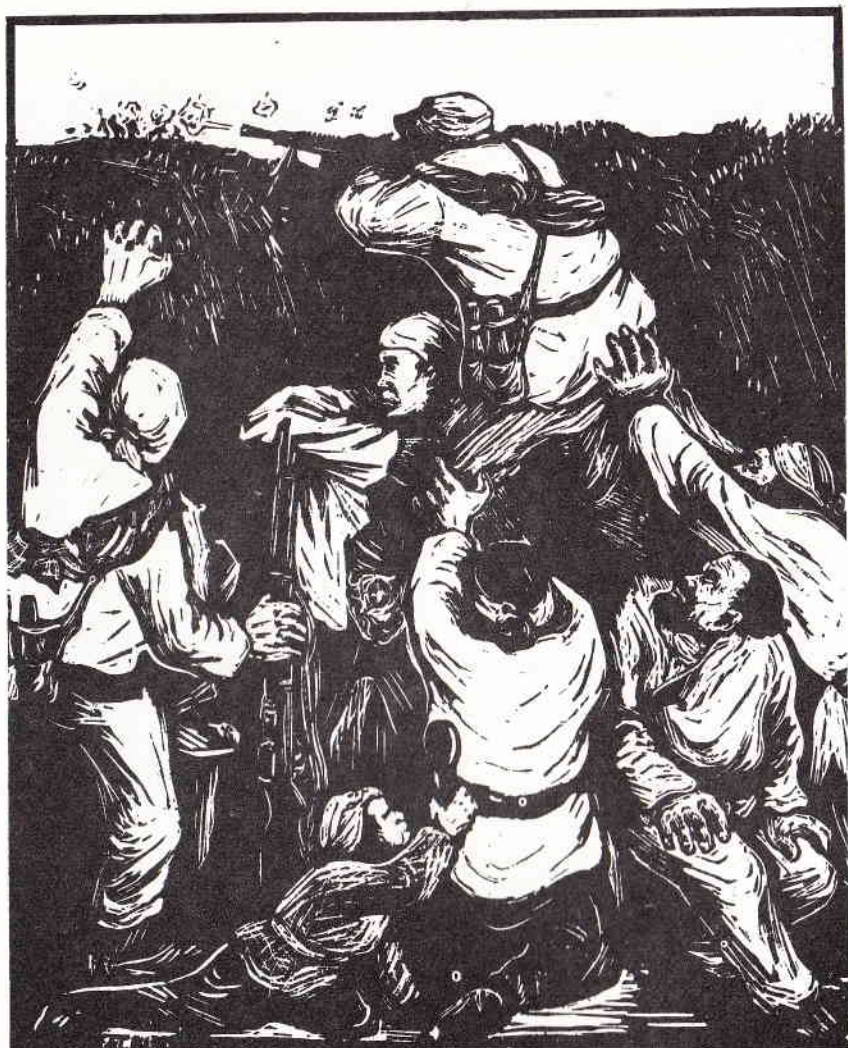
Works by Yan Han



Autumn Scene (traditional Chinese painting)



Yulan Magnolia (woodcut)



When the Enemy Comes (woodcut)

enemy and that it should be understood and appreciated by ordinary people. The Lu Xun Woodcut Group felt that western woodcuts would be acceptable to Chinese peasants only when their forms were slightly altered. Thus the artists began to create coloured wood-block prints of New Year pictures with a strong local flavour. Yan Han was active in this and local peasants liked his work *The Army and the People Fighting the Japanese*.

In the spring of 1943, he returned to Yanan as a teacher in the Lu Xun Art Academy. *When the Enemy Comes*, published in this issue, was his first woodcut of this period, showing how the soldiers and people united to fight the enemy in the Taihang Mountains. Among Yan Han's works of this nature are *Don't Let the Enemy Seize Our Grain*, *Brave Attack*, *Our Dear Eighth Routers Are Here*, *Escorting the Wounded Militiamen* and *The Five Heroes of Wolf-tooth Mountain*.

When the War of Liberation (1946-49) broke out Yan Han joined the army, fighting as well as doing propaganda work among the troops and sketching portraits for soldiers. His experiences in the land-reform movement enabled him to produce many important works such as *Taking the Feudal Stronghold*, *Voting with Beans*, *They Come from the Peasants' Sweat and Blood*, *Telling Bitter Stories* and *Interrogation*, which reflect the life of the people in a powerful, romantic style. Yan Han became known for depicting the revolutionary wars, exerting a great influence at home. He was also known abroad. *Life* magazine published an article on April 9, 1945, introducing Chinese woodcuts, among which were Yan Han's *Don't Let the Enemy Seize Our Grain*, *Election* and *A Medical Team*.

Yan Han has developed his own style. Even in the Yanan days, he refused to simply imitate foreign techniques or adopt traditional Chinese ones. To reflect the complexity of life, he experimented with new forms and a style acceptable to the Chinese people. The result of his efforts are to be seen first in *The Five Heroes of Wolf-tooth Mountain* and later in *They Come from the Peasants' Sweat and Blood* and *Interrogation*. He incorporated the techniques of traditional Chinese painting, line engraving and the western technique of contrasting large patches of black and



Interrogation (1948)

white into an organic whole. This is his outstanding contribution to the development of the new Chinese woodcut art.

After the establishment of New China in 1949 Yan Han taught or devoted his energies to woodcuts, tackling a variety of themes such as industry, agriculture, the Korean War, world peace and the changing face of Beijing. When the Monument to the People's Heroes was erected in Tiananmen Square, Beijing, Yan Han designed its relief sculpture *The Mighty People's Liberation Army Crosses the Yangzi*. It was during this period when he was at his most productive that in 1957 he was labelled as a Rightist and expelled from the Party. Despite these adverse circumstances, Yan Han persisted in his art. During the twenty-one years from 1957 to 1979, when he was rehabilitated, he produced over four hundred woodcuts, except for a period of nine years during the Cultural

Revolution when he was not allowed to do anything.

In 1958, Yan Han was sent to work in the countryside in Huailai County, Hebei Province, where he lived in a peasant's house. Though in poor health, he did his woodcuts every night by oil lamp. Within a little over one year, he had completed nearly one hundred miniature woodcuts, the size of a match or cigarette box, on the theme of the revolutionary war. Later he produced *Making Straw Sandals*, *Picking Wild Herbs*, *A School at the Battlefield*, *Fighting on the Mountains*, *Children's Corps* and *An Attack on the Feudal Stronghold* (see inside back cover). He also started sketching illustrations for books. His characterization was very good, particularly in his illustrations to Lu Xun's stories such as *The True Story of Ah Q*. Ah Q was a typical Chinese peasant in the old society who was at once rebellious and weak. As Yan Han was familiar with such people and the social conditions in Jiangsu and Chejiang at that time, his drawings were meaningful and profound, marking a new maturity.

However, during the Cultural Revolution Yan Han was again

Herding



sent to work on a farm. It was only in 1974 that he was transferred back to Beijing to do some paintings for a new hotel. After having completed a number of coloured woodcuts (see coloured plate *Yulan Magnolia*), he began to paint in the traditional style, using simple, powerful strokes and heavy colours. These paintings, therefore, bear some resemblance to woodcuts. But Yan Han was criticized and was finally sent back to the countryside again. Despite pol-

Illustration to Lu Xun's "The Story of Hair" (1973)



itical pressure, he chose to illustrate Lu Xun's story *Tomorrow*, in order to express his anguish. After Premier Zhou's death in 1976, he poured all his feelings into a woodcut *Qingming Festival of 1976*, telling his family, "Perhaps no one will see this woodcut before I die, but I'm sure that one day it will be seen."

After the downfall of the "gang of four", Yan Han has become active again. His latest woodcuts *Spring Tide*, *Herdin*, *The Oil Refinery* and *Bright Morning* are in praise of our age. Yan Han has said, as society advances, people's tastes change accordingly, and so an artist must keep up to date with these.

Yan Han is not satisfied with his achievements. He is now a professor at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. As a leading artist, he was elected vice-chairman of the Chinese Woodcut Artists' Association. A collection of his woodcuts will soon be published by the People's Art Publishing House, Beijing.

Shu Ting

Three Poems

My Motherland, Dear Motherland

I was an old, dilapidated water-wheel on your banks,
Creaking many weary songs for hundreds of years.
I was the smoke-blackened miner's lamp on your forehead,
Lighting the way when you sprawled in the tunnel of history.
I was the blighted rice ear, the road in need of repair,
The barge run aground on shoals,
With the tow-line deeply, deeply
Cutting into the flesh of your shoulders,
— O motherland!

Shu Ting (舒婷) is a 28-year-old woman worker in a bulb factory in Xiamen (Amoy), Fujian Province. In the last few years she has published a number of poems which have attracted the attention of poetic circles. The three poems published here (《祖国啊，我亲爱的祖国》、《这也是一切》、《致橡树》) originally appeared in *Poetry* (《诗刊》); No. 7, 1979, No. 1, 1980, and No. 4, 1979, respectively.

I was poverty,
I was grief.
I was your painful hope
From generation to generation,
Flowers from the sleeves of flying *Apsaras*
Which had not touched the earth for thousands of years,
— O motherland!

I am your new ideal
Just freed from the cobweb of myth.
I am your lotus seed under a quilt of snow,
Your dimples stained with tears.
I am the new white starting line,
The rosy dawn
Sending out shimmering rays,
— O motherland!

I am one of your one thousand million,
The sum total of your nine million six hundred thousand
square kilometres.
With your breasts, covered with wounds,
You fed me,
A girl who was perplexed, pensive and fervent.
Now, derive
From my flesh and blood
Your prosperity, your glory, your freedom,
— My motherland,
Dear motherland!

This Is Everything, Too

—Reply to a young friend

NOT all giant trees
Are broken by the storm;
Not all seeds
Find no soil to strike root;
Not all true feelings
Vanish in the desert of man's heart;
Not all dreams
Allow their wings to be clipped.

No, not everything
Ends as you foretold!

Not all flames
Burn themselves out
Without sparking off others;
Not all stars
Indicate the night
Without predicting the dawn;
Not all songs
Brush past the ears
Without remaining in the heart.

No, not everything
Ends as you foretold!

Not all appeals
Receive no response;
Not all losses
Are beyond retrieval;
Not all abysses
Mean destruction;
Not all destruction
Falls on the weak;
Not all souls
Can be ground underfoot
And turned into putrid mud;
Not all consequences
Are streaked with tears and blood
And do not show a smiling face.

Everything present is pregnant with the future,
Everything future comes from the past.
Have hope, struggle for it,
Bear these on your shoulders.

To the Oak

If I love you —
I'll never be like a campsis flower,
Displaying myself on your high branches;
If I love you —
I'll never mimic the infatuated birds,
Repeating the same monotonous song for green shade;
Or be a spring,
Gushing cool comfort;
A perilous peak,
Enhancing your height and dignity.
Unlike the sunlight,
Unlike spring rain;
None of these suffice!
I must be a kapok tree,
The image of a tree by your side.
Our roots, closely intertwined below,
Our leaves, touching in the clouds.
When a gust of wind brushes past,
We will greet each other,
No one else can
Understand our language.

You'll have bronze branches, an iron trunk,
Like knives, swords and halberds;
I'll have my large red flowers,
Like sighs, heavy and deep,
Or valiant torches.
Together, we'll share
The cold storms and thunderbolts,
Together, we'll share
The mist, rosy clouds and rainbows.
It seems we'll always be separate,
Yet we'll depend on each other.
Only this can be called profound love,
Wherein lies the faithfulness:
Loving not only your greatness,
But also the place where you stand,
The earth beneath your feet!

The Bright Pearl

LONG, long ago there was a snow-white Jade Dragon, living in a rock cave on the east bank of the Celestial River. In the great forest across the river lived a beautiful Golden Phoenix.

Leaving their homes every morning, the dragon and the phoenix met each other before going their different ways. One flew in the sky, while the other swam in the Celestial River. One day both came to a fairy island. There they found a shining pebble and were fascinated by its beauty.

"Look, how beautiful this pebble is!" Golden Phoenix said to Jade Dragon.

"Let's carve it into a pearl," said Jade Dragon.

Golden Phoenix nodded in agreement. Then they start working on it, Jade Dragon using his claws and Golden Phoenix her beak. They carved the pebble day after day, month after month, until they finally made it into a perfect small round ball. In high spirits Golden Phoenix flew to the sacred mountain to gather dewdrops and Jade Dragon carried a lot of clear water from the Celestial River. They sprinkled and washed the ball with dew and water. Gradually the ball turned into a dazzling pearl.

They had become attached to each other and both loved the pearl dearly. Neither wanted to go back to the cave and the

forest. So they settled down on the fairy island guarding the pearl.

It was a magic pearl. Wherever it shone, things grew better. Trees became green all the year round, flowers of all seasons bloomed together and the land yielded richer harvests.

One day the Queen Mother of Heaven left her palace and saw the brilliant rays shed by the pearl. Overwhelmed by the sight, she was eager to acquire it. She sent one of her guards to go in the middle of the night to steal the pearl from Jade Dragon and Golden Phoenix while they were fast asleep. When the guard came back with it, the Queen Mother was very pleased. She would not show it to anyone, but immediately hid it in the innermost room of her palace, to reach which one had to pass through nine locked doors.

When Jade Dragon and Golden Phoenix woke up in the morning they found the pearl gone. Frantically, they searched high and low for it. Jade Dragon looked into every nook and cranny at the bottom of the Celestial River, while Golden Phoenix combed every inch of the sacred mountain, but in vain. They continued their unhappy search day and night, hoping to recover their treasured pearl.

On the birthday of the Queen Mother, all the gods and goddesses in Heaven came to her palace to offer their congratulations. She prepared a grand feast, entertaining her guests with nectar and celestial peaches, the fruit of immortality. The gods and goddesses all said to her, "May your fortune be as boundless as the East Sea and your life last long like the South Mountain!" The Queen Mother was excited and, on a sudden impulse, declared, "My immortal friends, I want to show you a precious pearl which cannot be found either in Heaven or on earth."

So she unfastened nine keys from her girdle and unlocked the nine doors one after the other. From the innermost room of her palace she took out the bright pearl, placed it on a golden tray and carried it carefully to the centre of the banqueting hall. The whole hall was instantly lit by the pearl. The guests were fascinated by its radiance and greatly admired it.

In the meantime, Jade Dragon and Golden Phoenix were con-

tinuing their fruitless search. Suddenly Golden Phoenix saw its bright light. She called to Jade Dragon, "Look, isn't that the light from our pearl?"

Jade Dragon stuck his head out of the Celestial River and looked. "Of course! No doubt about it! Let's go and get it back."

They flew towards the light, which led them to the palace of the Queen Mother. When they landed there, they found the immortals crowding around the pearl and praising it lavishly. Pushing through the crowd, Jade Dragon and Golden Phoenix shouted together, "This is our pearl!"

The Queen Mother was so enraged by their claim that she snapped, "Nonsense! I'm the mother of the Heavenly Emperor. All treasures belong to me!"

Jade Dragon and Golden Phoenix were infuriated by her remarks. They protested, "Heaven did not give birth to this pearl, nor was it grown on earth. It was carved and polished by us. It took many years' hard work!"

Shamed and angry, the Queen Mother clutched the tray tightly while ordering her palace guards to eject Jade Dragon and Golden Phoenix. But they fought their way back, determined to snatch the pearl from the Queen Mother. The three struggled over the golden tray with all their might. As the tray shook amidst the tussle, the pearl fell off, rolled to the edge of the stairs and then dropped into the air.

Jade Dragon and Golden Phoenix rushed out of the palace, trying to save it from being dashed to pieces. They flew beside the falling pearl, until it slowly landed on earth. When it touched the ground the pearl immediately turned into a clear, green lake. Jade Dragon and Golden Phoenix could not bear to part from it, and so they changed themselves into two mountains, remaining for ever by the side of the lake.

Since then Jade Dragon Mountain and Golden Phoenix Mountain have quietly stood beside the West Lake. Two lines of an old song are still popular in Hangzhou:

The gleaming pearl of the West Lake fell from Heaven,
The flying dragon and dancing phoenix alighted on Qiantang.

Golden Ox Lake

Many years ago, the West Lake was called Golden Ox Lake.

A vast expanse of water, it was bordered by dark, fertile fields, in which the peasants grew and irrigated their crops. When the heavy ears of rice were ripe, they looked like beautiful strings of pearls. During the slack season, people fished and caught shrimps. They lived a peaceful and happy life.

A golden ox lived at the bottom of the lake. If there was a drought and the water dried up, the golden ox would appear, its golden back, uplifted head and erect horns conspicuous from afar. It would spew mouthful after mouthful of fresh water until the lake was full again.

One summer, there was a dry spell which lasted for eighty-one days. Even the lake bed was visible. The fields were baked hard like rocks; the cracks in the earth were several inches wide. The green rice shoots withered. The people were parched, listless and hollow-eyed. Each day, they longed for the golden ox.

The peasants were sitting by the lake one morning waiting, when they suddenly heard a moo as the golden ox appeared, rising from the shallow water on the lake bed. Shaking its head and flicking its tail, it spewed water until the lake was soon full.

Seeing this, the people wept tears of joy and thanked the golden ox. Raising its head and blinking its bright eyes, it mooed, and slowly disappeared below the water again.

News of this marvel spread quickly. When the magistrate of Qiantang County heard of it, he held his sides and chuckled gleefully, "It's a living treasure! If I present it to the Emperor, he's certain to heap riches and honours on me!" So he ordered his servants to go and capture the golden ox at once.

His servants and the local bailiffs hurried to the lake, where they were confronted by only water. And the golden ox? They asked the peasants, who, realizing that they were sent by the magistrate, pretended they did not know or walked away.

The servants returned empty-handed, to the fury of the magistrate. Playing with his moustache, he pondered over the matter until he thought of an evil plan. He ordered his servants to drive everyone to the lake and make them drain it. "Kill all who refuse!"

Thus all the men and women, young and old, were compelled to erect water-wheels to drain the lake.

For eighty-one days they drained it until everyone was exhausted. Finally, the lake was dry. On the bed lay the golden ox, lighting up the earth and sky.

The magistrate approached to have a closer look, but the light dazzled his eyes. When he ordered his servants to seize the golden ox, it, however, was rooted to the spot and could not be moved. The peasants were secretly happy.

Since it could not be lifted, the magistrate told the onlookers, "A reward of three hundred taels of silver for anyone who can dislodge it!"

Ignoring him, no one stirred.

So the magistrate raged, "If it isn't removed today, you'll all be killed!"

At that moment, the golden ox snorted. The earth trembled and the mountains swayed. A whirlwind whipped up dust and stones. The terrified magistrate blanched, his legs shaking. He wanted to run away, but could not.

Then the golden ox, rolling its eyes, rose up, lifted its head and snorted again. Water gushed out of its mouth at the magistrate and his men, engulfing them in huge waves.

The lake quickly filled with water.

The golden ox never appeared again and the lake was never dry. But the peasants could not forget the golden ox. Beyond the city wall beside the lake they erected a tower, on which they stood every day hoping to see the golden ox again. The tower was named "Gold-gushing Gate".

IN MEMORY OF AGNES SMEDLEY

May 30 this year marked the thirtieth anniversary of the death of the progressive American journalist and writer Agnes Smedley. A great friend of the Chinese people, she came to China in the late 1920s and made outstanding contributions in acquainting the people of the world with the Chinese revolution. In this issue, we are publishing an article by two American friends written for this occasion as well as Agnes Smedley's own reminiscence of Lu Xun.

—The Editors

(Left to right) Agnes Smedley, George Bernard Shaw, Soong Ching Ling, Cai Yuanpei and Lu Xun in Shanghai, 1933



Jan and Steve MacKinnon

Lu Xun and Agnes Smedley

AGNES Smedley (1892-1950), daughter of a United States Missouri tenant farmer, would seem an unlikely friend and collaborator for modern China's greatest writer, Lu Xun. Yet in retrospect the number of affinities between the two are striking. By the time they met, Smedley was a seasoned revolutionary activist and journalist who would later spend years as a war correspondent with the Communist-led Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies and write the now classic biography of Marshal Zhu De, *The Great Road*. Both Lu Xun and Smedley were deeply serious and devoted to the cause of revolutionary change in society and culture. Both were allied increasingly with, but yet remained independent of, the Chinese Communist Party. As writers of accomplishment in their middle years, Smedley and Lu Xun had already seen and experienced more than most of us do in a lifetime. Although together they disdained what Lu Xun and Smedley called "salon socialism", they could write movingly about romantic intellectuals in Shanghai who were to the right or left of them politically. These, then, were some of the affinities which drew

Jan and Steve MacKinnon are an American couple now working in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing.

Smedley and Lu Xun together and cemented their relationship, and helped to overcome their very diverse national, class and cultural origins.

Two schoolteachers brought Smedley to Lu Xun's home where the two of them met for the first time in December 1929. They found that they could communicate in German. Within weeks they were working together in concrete ways to deepen revolutionary consciousness in China and introduce the work of China's new intellectuals to the outside world.*

Agnes Smedley had been in Shanghai for eight months before she met Lu Xun. We know Smedley's exact date of arrival because British intelligence agents followed her assiduously, writing regular reports on her which still survive today in the National Archives, New Delhi, India. To the British, Smedley was a notorious and dangerous revolutionary whose purpose was the overthrow of the British in the crown colony of India, and so they had been monitoring Smedley's activities around the world for over a decade.

By 1929, Smedley was a veteran of the Indian nationalist revolutionary movement. Since 1917 she had been engaged in the struggle for Indian independence, first in the United States, where she had been imprisoned illegally for six months in 1918, and then in Berlin between 1921-1928. It was in Berlin where Smedley matured as a writer and revolutionary. Along with Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and others, she participated in the movement out of which the Communist Party of India later emerged. Smedley wrote a great many articles about the Indian situation during the 1920s, and forged lasting friendships with major Indian nationalists like Jawaharlal Nehru and Lajpat Rai. Often Smedley and her cohorts battled the ultra-Left lines within the movement put forward by such figures as M.N. Roy and M. Borodin.

Smedley also had been fighting for women's rights for fifteen years before coming to China, especially in the field of birth control. Her closest associates in Berlin included the leading birth control

* See *Lu Xun's Diary* 《鲁迅日记》 entry for December 27, 1929. In the excerpt from *Battle Hymn of China* (London 1944) reprinted in this issue, Smedley misremembers her first meeting with Lu Xun — confusing it with Lu Xun's birthday party in September 1930.

advocate, Margaret Sanger, the great socialist artist, Kaethe Kollwitz, anarchist Emma Goldman, actress Tilli Durieux, and the Danish novelist, Karin Michaelis.

Her first book was an autobiographical novel, *Daughter of Earth* (1928), which was receiving considerable critical acclaim in Europe and America on the eve of her departure for China in late 1928. The success of this book, as well as her free-lance newspaper work on India and women, made it possible for her to go to China as a correspondent for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, one of Europe's leading newspapers.

When Smedley first met him in 1929, Lu Xun was already recognized as twentieth-century China's finest writer. Like Smedley he was tormented by the condition of his people — their poverty and oppression. He had spent restless years in the 1920s wandering from North to South, finally settling towards the end of the decade in Shanghai where he married and began to raise a family. He presided over the Shanghai literary scene, inspiring and encouraging the young and lashing out often at Kuomintang repression as well as at factionalism within the literary Left. Lu Xun was steadfastly internationalist in outlook. He himself had studied in Japan. In addition to his own writings, he translated major German and Russian works. Gorky was his favourite Western author.

The Lu Xun-Smedley collaboration began in early 1930 when Lu Xun helped to find a translator for Smedley's novel, *Daughter of Earth*. He also put Smedley in print in Chinese for the first time by publishing an article by her on conditions in rural China in the May issue of *Mengya Yuekan* (*Sprouts Monthly*), which Lu Xun was then editing. For her part, Smedley introduced Lu Xun to the graphic work of her German friend, Kaethe Kollwitz and soon became an intermediary for correspondence between these two cultural giants of Europe and China. It is quite possible that she also introduced Lu Xun to the work of the German socialist cartoonist George Grosz.*

* Ge Baoquan, "The Revolutionary Friendship Between Lu Xun and Agnes Smedley" (《鲁迅和斯沫特莱的革命友谊》), *Geming Wenwu* (《革命文物》), 1976, No. 3, PP. 15-18.

During the spring and summer of 1930, Smedley and Lu Xun worked with the organizers of a League of Left-wing Writers. Smedley concentrated on promoting the works of these writers in progressive circles in Europe, India, and North America. Smedley introduced Lu Xun to Harold Issacs, the young editor of a Shanghai English language journal, *China Forum*, which soon began publishing translations of works by Lu Xun and others. Not surprisingly, Smedley met most of the major progressive figures on the Shanghai literary scene through Lu Xun and wrote some of the first reports on progressive literature to be published in English.*

Smedley had come to China largely ignorant of the realities of Chinese conditions. But with the help of Lu Xun, Mao Dun, Ding Ling and other writers as well as scholars at the Institute of Social Sciences in Shanghai, she acquired a penetrating understanding of Chinese conditions in a remarkably short time. Concrete evidence of this are her two books, *Chinese Destinies* (1933) — largely about life in Shanghai — and *China's Red Army Marches* (1934) — the first book in a Western language on the Jiangxi Soviet — and her numerous articles in German and English. She also edited a collection of translated works by Left-wing writers, *Short Stories from China* (1933-34), and a series of reports compiled by herself and Harold Issacs entitled *Five Years of Kuomintang Reaction* (1932). Smedley's output of books and articles during her Shanghai years was enormous. As she often indicated, Smedley could hardly have achieved so much without the help of Lu Xun and his colleagues.

It is sometimes said that Lu Xun was the dominant influence on Smedley's writing style. This is doubtful. Their styles were distinctly different and well-established by the time they met. Certainly Smedley admired Lu Xun's work enormously. But while there were similarities in their choice of subject-matter and in their commitment to exploring the possibilities of social realism, Smedley

* See for example, "Revolutionary Theatre in China", and "Thru Darkness in China", in *New Masses*, 6:4 (Sept., 1930) and 6:9 (Feb., 1931) respectively; "Tendencies in Modern Chinese Literature", *Modern Review*, Vol. 47 (Jan.-June, 1930), pp. 431-38; and *Frankfurter Zeitung*, March 29 and June 15, 1930.

wrote in a much less cryptic and allegorical fashion. As she often bitterly acknowledged, people are largely products of their environment, and Smedley simply lacked the educational background of a Lu Xun. Or to put it differently, Lu Xun's writing had an erudition and a lustre that is not present in Smedley's always blunt, hard-hitting style. Smedley recognized this difference herself when she called Lu Xun the Voltaire of the Chinese revolution.

By autumn 1930, the partnership between Smedley and Lu Xun was in full bloom. Smedley, for example, played a pivotal role in Lu Xun's fiftieth birthday celebration on September 17. She arranged the affair for the League of Left-wing Writers in a Dutch-Indonesian restaurant in the French Concession. This literary event was important both politically and socially. With Kuomintang repression a life-and-death matter, the need for secrecy was acute. But the organizers successfully brought league members together in one place and used the occasion to recruit new members from progressive circles, giving the Left-wing writers' movement new organizational momentum around the figure of Lu Xun. In the word portrait that accompanies this article, Smedley describes the scene vividly. She also captured the spirit of that day in her now famous snapshot of Lu Xun sitting in a wicker chair at the party on the lawn in front of the restaurant. (*See illustration.*)

On the night of February 7, 1931, five leading members of the League of Left-wing Writers were summarily executed by Kuomintang authorities. Lu Xun's answer was the article, "Present Conditions of Literature and Art in Darkest China", which he asked Smedley to translate and have published abroad. Undoubtedly Smedley consulted with others and decided to wait because she genuinely feared that the article would lead to the arrest and execution of Lu Xun. She sent instead a passionate manifesto and appeal for help from the League of Left-wing Writers which was penned by Lu Xun, translated by Mao Dun and Smedley, and then secreted by Smedley to New York and elsewhere. In the United States, this appeal appeared in the June 1931 issue of the *New Masses* published in New York. This appeal immediately produced



Lu Hsun in Shanghai, 1930

hundreds of letters and telegrams of protest to the Kuomintang from writers and artists all over the world.*

We could go on establishing the details of the collaboration between these two friends by tracing the twenty-four entries pertaining to Smedley in Lu Xun's diary and by pursuing other sources. But one incident should suffice to demonstrate that the bonds between these two people continued to grow. In January 1932, the Japanese bombed the area in Shanghai where Lu Xun lived. Smedley sneaked through the Japanese barricades and rushed in a panic to his home. She wrote:

We reached the home of my friend and found it partially destroyed. I hammered on the doors and shouted in English and German, but no one answered. Marooned in their homes, many Chinese refused to respond to anyone, and some of them died of hunger rather than open their doors. . . . Only when the war was over did I learn that Lu Xun and his family had been rescued and hidden by Japanese friends.**

Another Lu Xun-Smedley similarity was their perpetually poor health. By early 1933, Smedley's deteriorating health had forced her to depart for a rest cure in the Soviet Union. Her health restored, she returned to Shanghai via the U.S. in late 1934. As Mao Dun has movingly recounted, in 1935 and 1936 she time and again urged Lu Xun — then dying of tuberculosis — to try the same rest cure. Smedley pleaded and arranged everything through the Soviet consulate in Shanghai, but Lu Xun steadfastly refused, saying, "Everyone cannot run away! Someone must stand and fight.***"

The 1935-36 period was perhaps the most fruitful of the Smedley-Lu Xun collaboration. Together they smuggled writers and artists out of Shanghai who were targets of Chiang Kai-shek's brownshirts.

* Details in Ge Baoquan. Again in *Battle Hymn of China*, pp. 64-65, Smedley misremembers this incident.

** *Battle Hymn of China*, p. 80. By "war" Smedley means the "incident" during which the Japanese bombarded Chinese sections of Shanghai in relation to their 1931 seizure of Manchuria.

*** *Battle Hymn of China*, p. 64. For Mao Dun's account, see *Reminiscences of Lu Xun* (《鲁迅回忆录》) (Beijing, 1956), pp. 62-64.

They edited and published a book of Kaethe Kollwitz's prints with funds raised by Smedley. This book was reprinted again in 1956 and remains today the most important Chinese work on the subject. Lu Xun continued to introduce Smedley to promising young writers like the couple from Manchuria, Xiao Jun and Xiao Hong, and of course both continued to work closely with the League of Left-wing Writers.

Finally, Smedley was one of those through whom Lu Xun maintained contact with the Chinese Communist Party as it established a new revolutionary base camp in northwest China. According to Mao Dun, when Lu Xun heard about the successful completion of the Long March in the fall of 1935, he cabled his congratulations to the Red Army through Smedley via Paris and Moscow. A few months later, Party leaders in the temporary headquarters of the Red Army at Bao'an sent Feng Xuefeng as the Party representative to Lu Xun and the League of Left-wing Writers. Feng sought out Smedley for help in contacting Lu Xun, and the three met together a number of times. When the controversy among the Left-wing writers broke out later in the spring of 1936 as to how to best do united front work in the literary field, Smedley sided with Lu Xun and the slogan, "Mass literature of the national revolutionary war".

Smedley left Shanghai for Xi'an in August 1936, with the hope of joining the Red Army. Lu Xun, she knew, was gravely ill and she was in anguish over this. When the news reached her of his death in October, Smedley was grief-stricken. The depth of their friendship was expressed again by the fact that she was chosen as one of the members of the funeral committee — the only foreigner to be so named.

Parallel circumstances surrounded Smedley's death fourteen years later. Lu Xun died at the age of 55 and Smedley at 58. Both died exhausted from overwork, fatigue, and self-denial in the cause of the liberation of the poor and the oppressed.

Agnes Smedley

Reminiscences of Lu Xun

ONE hot afternoon in the middle of 1930, two teachers, man and wife, called on me and made two requests: one, to contribute articles on India and money to a new magazine, *Da Dao* (*The Great Way*), which was to be devoted to a study of subjected Asiatic peoples; the other, to rent a small foreign restaurant where a reception and dinner could be given to celebrate the fiftieth birthday of Lu Xun. Lu Xun was the great writer whom some Chinese called the "Gorky of China", but who, to my mind, was really its Voltaire.

The first request I granted readily, but the second was fraught with danger, because the hundred men and women who were to be invited represented the world of "dangerous thoughts". My friends assured me, however, that all guests would be invited by word of mouth only and sworn to silence, and that "sentries" would be posted at street intersections leading to the restaurant.

On the afternoon of the birthday celebration I stood with my two friends at the garden gate of a small Dutch restaurant in the French Concession. From our position we had a clear view of the long street by which the guests would come. At the street intersec-

This is an extract from Agnes Smedley's *Battle Hymn of China*, Victor Gollancz Ltd., London, 1944. The spelling of Chinese names has been changed according to the new Chinese phonetic alphabet. The title is ours. — Ed.

tion before me I could see a Chinese in a long gown apparently waiting for a bus, while another sat on a nearby doorstep.

Lu Xun, accompanied by his wife and small son, arrived early, and I met, for the first time, the man who became one of the most influential factors in my life during all my years in China. He was short and frail, and wore a cream-coloured silk gown and soft Chinese shoes. He was bareheaded and his close-cropped hair stood up like a brush. In structure his face was like that of an average Chinese, yet it remains in my memory as the most eloquent face I have ever seen. A kind of living intelligence and awareness streamed from it. He spoke no English, but considerable German, and in that language we conversed. His manner, his speech, and his every gesture radiated the indefinable harmony and charm of a perfectly integrated personality. I suddenly felt as awkward and ungracious as a clod.

Almost immediately came the stream of guests, and Lu Xun moved back into the garden. Repeatedly I turned to watch him, attracted by his thin hand raised in some gesture.

As the guests went by, my two friends explained that they included writers, artists, professors, students, actors, reporters, research scholars, and even two patricians. This last pair came not because they shared Lu Xun's convictions, but to honour his integrity, courage, and scholarship.

It was a motley and exciting gathering — pioneers in an intellectual revolution. One group, poorly dressed and apparently half-starved, was pointed out as representing a new modern aesthetic theatre trying to edge in social dramas between Wilde's *Salome* and *Lady Windermere's Fan*. A more prosperous-looking group proved to be Fudan University students led by Professor Hong Shen. They had produced some of Ibsen's plays and one or two written by their professor, who was also a director of one of the first Chinese motion-picture companies. A third dramatic group was made up of young Leftist actors, writers, and translators who had produced plays by Romain Rolland, Upton Sinclair, Gorky, and Remarque. Much later they produced *Carmen*, were raided by police after the third performance, arrested, and closed down. Detectives in the audience had not liked the last

scene, in which Don José stabbed Carmen to death: as Carmen hurled her ring at her cast-off lover, she uttered words that reminded them of the split between the Communists and the Kuomintang!

From my place at the gate I now saw a number of people approaching. One tall, thin young man walked rapidly and kept glancing behind him; he was clearly a student, and as he passed, my friends whispered that he was editor of the *Shanghai Bao*, underground Communist paper which conducted a kind of journalistic guerrilla warfare in the city. Shortly after came one whose foreign suit was wrinkled and whose hair was wild and dishevelled. He had just come from months in prison. He had been suspected of representing the Chinese Red Aid; the charge had been true, but money had proved stronger. His family had spent a fortune bribing his captors.

The garden was filled and no more guests came, but my friends and I still stood guard. When darkness began to fall, half of the guests left. Others took our place as sentries and we went inside the restaurant with the other guests.

After the dinner, speeches began and one of my friends translated for me. The Dutch restaurant-owner understood no Chinese, so he did not worry us, but the Chinese waiters stood listening intently. When the man with the wild hair made a report on prison conditions, we watched every move of the servants. After him came the editor of the *Shanghai Bao*, giving the first factual report I had so far heard on the rise of the Red Army and on the "harvest uprisings" of peasants who had fought the landlords and then poured into the Red Army like rivulets into an ever-broadening river.

A short, heavy-set young woman with bobbed hair began to tell of the need for developing proletarian literature. She ended her address by appealing to Lu Xun to become the protector and "master" of the new League of Left Writers and League of Left Artists, the initial groups which later became the Chinese Cultural Federation.

Throughout, Lu Xun listened carefully, promptly turning his attention to new speakers, his forefinger all the while tracing the edge of his teacup. When all had finished, he rose and began to

talk quietly, telling a story of the half-century of intellectual turmoil which had been his life — the story of China uprooted.

Born under the Manchu Dynasty into a poor scholarly village family, he had grown up in a feudal setting into which the first modern ideas preceding the 1911 revolution had seeped very slowly. Too poor to study in Western countries, he had gone to Japan, then sympathetic to the Chinese nationalist movement. He had studied modern medicine, but also read the first Japanese translations of the works of Tolstoy. Tolstoy had introduced him to social thought and to the power of modern literature.

He had returned to China to practise modern medicine, but, like many medical men of the Occident, soon realized that most sickness and disease are rooted in poverty and in the ignorance that goes with poverty. Only the rich could afford medical treatment. Influenced by classical Russian writers, he turned to literature as a weapon to combat feudal thought, began to write short stories in the style of the Russian classics, and gradually abandoned medicine altogether. During the Chinese intellectual renaissance he had been a professor of literature in Beijing, the birthplace of the new thought.

In later years he had studied German and Russian and translated a number of Russian novels and essays. His purpose, he said, was to lay before Chinese youth the best of modern social literature. He had also begun to collect Western classical and modern paintings and specimens of the graphic arts, and had published a number of volumes for young artists.

He was now asked, he said, to lead a movement of proletarian literature, and some of his young friends were urging him to become a proletarian writer. It would be childish to pretend that he was a proletarian writer. His roots were in the village, in peasant and scholarly life. Nor did he believe that Chinese intellectual youth, with no experience of the life, hopes, and sufferings of workers and peasants, could — as yet — produce proletarian literature. Creative writing must spring from experience, not theory.

Despite this, he would continue to place the best of Western literature and art before Chinese youth. He was willing to help and guide youth, or, as they requested, to be their master. But pro-

rect them? Who could do that under a regime which called even the mildest social literature criminal? As “master”, he urged educated youth to share the life of the workers and peasants, and draw their material from life, but study Western social literature and art for form.

As the meeting came to a close, one young man bent towards me and shook his head sadly:

“Disappointing, wasn’t it? I mean Lu Xun’s attitude towards proletarian literature. It discourages youth.”

My lifelong hostility to professional intellectuals sprang to life. Chinese intellectuals had never done physical labour, and their writing was a profession divorced from experience. To them even the word “youth” meant students only, and towards workers and peasants they maintained a superior though sympathetic attitude. Much of the “proletarian literature” which they had created up to that time had been artificial, a weak imitation of the Russian.

To the young critic I replied that I agreed entirely with Lu Xun.

My life became interlocked with that of Lu Xun and with his closest colleague, Mao Dun, one of the better-known Chinese novelists. Together the three of us collected and published a volume of the etchings of Kaethe Kollwitz, the German folk-artist, and together we wrote, for the Press of Occidental Countries, most of the appeals against political reaction affecting Chinese intellectuals. Often Mao Dun and I would meet on some street corner and, after a careful scrutiny of the street on which Lu Xun lived, enter his house and spend an evening with him. We would order dinner from a restaurant and spend hours in conversation. None of us was a Communist, but we all considered it an honour to aid and support men who were fighting and dying for the liberation of the poor.

Lu Xun occupied the ancient position of honour, that of “teacher” or “master” to the young intellectuals of China. There were many cliques among them, and each strove to win him to their side and their “line”. He towered above them, refusing to be used by one or the other in their shifting alignments. He listened to all, discussed their problems, criticized their writing, encouraged them. And his name stood first in the magazines they published.

He often spoke to me of his plans for a historical novel based on his life, but the social reaction in which his country wallowed seemed to leave no time for this. So deep was his hatred of "the slaughter of the innocents" and the violation of men's rights that after a while he was using his pen only as a weapon — a veritable dagger it was — of political criticism.

Of all Chinese writers, he seemed the most intricately linked with Chinese history, literature, and culture. It was almost impossible to translate into English some of his "political criticisms" because, unable to attack reaction openly, his writings were a mosaic of allusions to personalities, events, and ideas of the darkest periods of China's past. Every educated Chinese knew that he was comparing present tyranny with that of the past. Through these political criticisms ran rich streams of both Chinese and Western culture, couched in a style as fine as an etching. He introduced literary magazine after literary magazine to the public, only to see each suppressed. These introductions, compact and chaste, were flown like proud banners. To him, freedom of thought and expression was the essence of human achievement. So distinctive was his style that pseudonyms failed to shield him, and censors began to mutilate his articles until they often appeared senseless. Writers, editors, and artists associated with him began to disappear without trace; only his age and eminence protected him from arrest. For a number of years only the Left intellectuals of Japan were able to publish his unexpurgated writings. To Japanese intellectuals he was the best-known and most respected Chinese writer.

The disappearance or death of his followers acted like corrosive poison on Lu Xun's body and mind, and he began to sicken. He sometimes grew so ill that he could not rise. He felt that his heart was failing and agreed to receive the best foreign doctor in Shanghai. After the examination the doctor took me aside and said that he was dying of tuberculosis and that only a prolonged rest in a cool, dry climate could halt the disease. The doctor added: "But of course he won't follow my advice. These old-fashioned, ignorant Chinese do not believe in modern medicine!"

Lu Xun did not listen to the advice, but hardly because he was old-fashioned or ignorant. "You ask me to lie on my back for a

year while others are fighting and dying?" he asked us accusingly. When we answered such objections, he reminded us of his poverty, but when we offered to collect the money needed, he still refused. Maxim Gorky invited him to the Soviet Union as his guest for a year, but he would not go. He said the Kuomintang would shriek to all China that he was receiving "Moscow gold".

"They say that anyway!" I argued.

"They dare not," he cried. "Everyone knows they lie! Anyway, China needs me. I cannot go."

We pleaded with him in vain. "Everyone cannot run away!" he said. "Someone must stand and fight."

Ren Xu

Fengxiang Coloured Clay Models

If you were to visit Liuying Village, Fengxiang County in the northwestern province of Shaanxi, you would be surprised to find the houses and courtyards adorned with colourful clay figures. Who are the artists? The local peasants.

It is an art which has been handed down for generations for six hundred years. It is said that during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), in the time of the first emperor Zhu Yuanzhang, some of his troops settled in Liuying Village as farmers. Among these were two porcelain makers from Jingdezhen in Jiangxi. In their spare time, they made clay toys for the children or sold their wares at temple fairs. Eventually the whole village learned the art.

The clay is mixed with fibre and cast in a mould. After drying, it is whitewashed and painted. Animals such as oxen, goats, pigs, rabbits, dogs, lions and tigers are a favourite subject. Humorously exaggerated, their bodies are delightfully decorated with leaf and lotus, pomegranate, peony or peach blossom patterns. Other designs are taken from ancient stone-engravings and pottery.

Tigers are very popular because it is thought traditionally they have the power to ward off evil. Since the peasants in Shaanxi

Ren Xu is a cultural worker at the Shaanxi Centre of Popular Culture.

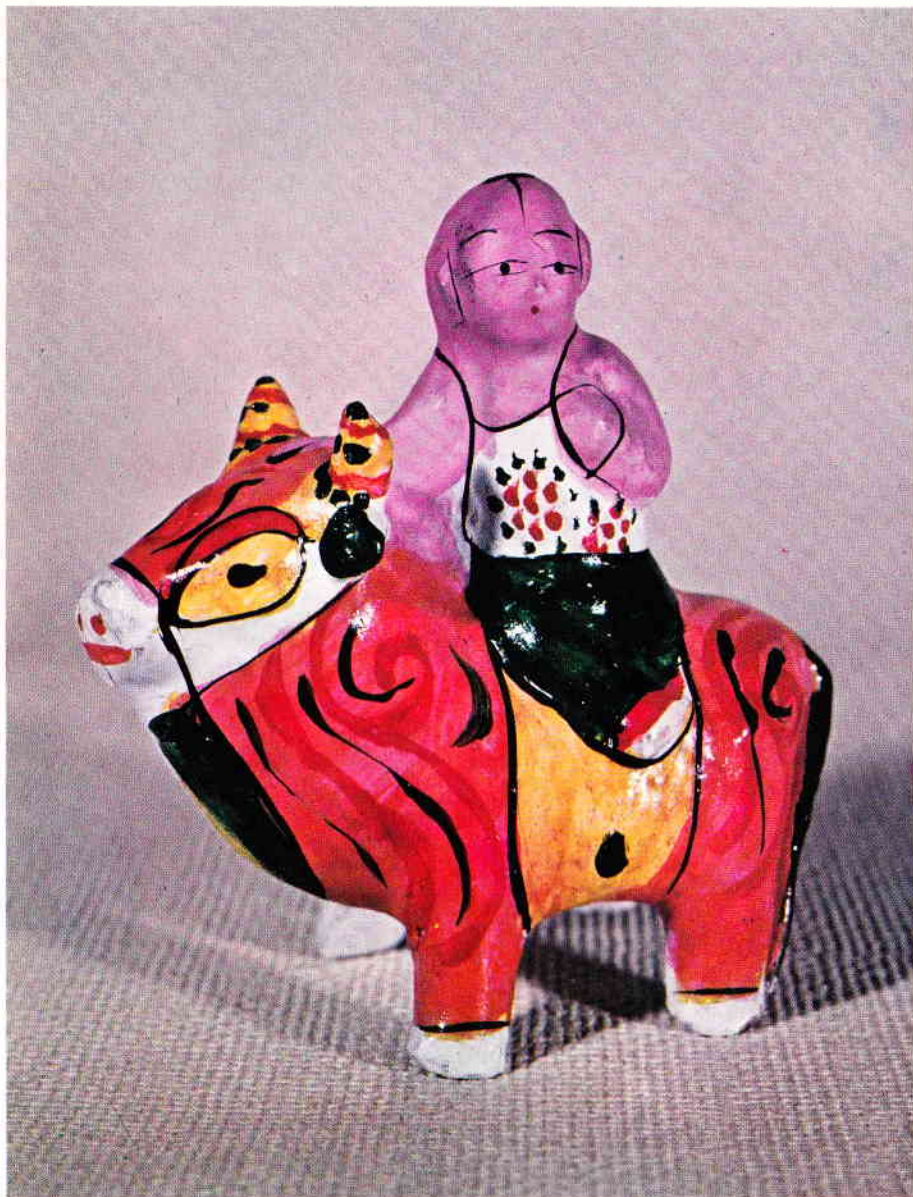


Tiger Roaring

Fengxiang Coloured Clay Models



A Lion ▲
 ◀ A Monkey
 An Ox ▼
 Horse and Deer ▶



The Cowherd

love to eat red peppers, they affectionately put a red pepper for a tiger's nose, while its ears are decorated with flowers and butterflies. Its brow, cheeks and chin also have flower patterns. Oxen, however, are painted in red or black, with a few designs on its head and back to show the animal's obedient and toiling nature.

Apart from animals, figures are also portrayed. These are usually the heroes of the great classical novels and operas, which are loved throughout China. They typify the virtues of courage, honesty and justice. Some villains are also modelled. The figures average about fifteen centimetres in height.

The clay models play an important role in local life. When a baby is a month old, for example, his maternal grandmother will present him with a model tiger. Decorated with lotus and pomegranate flowers, to symbolize happiness and good luck, the tiger will drive away all evil. Some models are even bigger than the baby. Mothers go back to work in the fields a month or so after the birth, so the tiger, in its dual role of guardian and plaything, will be placed near the baby.

Another local custom is that a mother-in-law should steal a model of a unicorn delivering a baby to give to her newly-wed daughter-in-law, meaning that she desires her to bear a son as soon as possible. Pedlars ignore such thefts when they occur, because, if a son is born, the family will give him a lavish reward. The unicorn symbolizes good luck.

These charming clay models are becoming more widely known in China, while foreign visitors are at last having the chance to appreciate them too.

Xin Yu

New Beginnings and Old Shadows

A History of Modern Chinese Literature («中国现代文学史»), by Teachers of Beijing University and Others, Jiangsu People's Publishing House, 1979, 554 pages.

The book under review will interest specialists and general readers alike for its information on current thoughts and trends in the study of modern Chinese literature, with contributions by more than twenty teachers and researchers from nine universities and colleges. Issued last year, it merits attention if only because it is the latest book on the subject.

Research on modern Chinese literature was suspended during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), when most of the established writers were persecuted and their works banned. It was impossible to mention them, let alone discuss them. Since 1976, literary life has been returning to normal. Now nearly thirty works, both new and revised editions, have been already published or are in the press. A fresh look is being taken at some complicated, controversial problems, while some are being studied that have been previously avoided. Thus academic circles are showing an unparalleled vitality.

Xin Yu is a literary critic.

One of the most tragic results of the decade of the Cultural Revolution was the distortion of modern Chinese literature, dating from the 1919 May 4th Movement to the birth of the People's Republic in 1949. Its new-democratic, anti-imperialist, anti feudal nature was simply ignored. Rather it was judged and censored by the current standards of socialist literature in an attempt to discredit it altogether. In this new book, an effort has been made to abandon the practice of labelling such works as bourgeois and revisionist. Prominence is given to such outstanding democratic writers as Ba Jin, Lao She and Cao Yu, while recognition is given to the works of Bing Xin, Wang Tongzhao, Xu Dishan, Lu Yan, Ouyang Yuqian and Hong Shen, which advocated patriotism, humanitarianism and individual emancipation.

The ultra-Leftists opposed the revolutionary writings of the thirties, and their attack on the literati has almost no parallel in the history of China or elsewhere. *A History of Modern Chinese Literature* devotes much space to a just evaluation of this period. In Chapters V, VII and IX, it is shown that most of the writers of the thirties were revolutionary petty-bourgeois intellectuals. Their petty-bourgeois outlook and some other factors accounted for weaknesses and errors in the early stages of the proletarian literary movement. They nevertheless endeavoured to serve the revolution by their pens, thus weakening the influence of the bourgeoisie and strengthening the leadership of the proletariat in literature. Their works showed a freshness of subject-matter, characterization, methods and style. While acknowledging the problems that arose in the thirties, the book praises the historical contributions of these writers.

The authors also provide an exhaustive study of the rise of the people's literature in the liberated areas under the leadership of the Communist Party. Later ultra-Leftists deliberately ignored the changes which took place in literature after the Yanan Forum on literature and art in 1942, in order to deprive modern Chinese literature of its revolutionary tradition. This book offers a good analysis of Zhao Shuli's realistic, national and popular style; it gives an account of the historic contribution of *The White-haired Girl* as the forerunner of modern Chinese opera; it describes Ding Ling's

successful attempt at characterization in her novel *The Sun Shines over the Sanggan River* and Sun Li's vivid portrayal of the new life in his stories.

Some untouched areas are also explored. For example, the first section of Chapter X is devoted to the progressive and resistance activities of writers in Shanghai's foreign concessions during the early part of the anti-Japanese war. These helped make known to those in the enemy-occupied areas and abroad the Chinese people's determination to fight the aggressors, and propagate the policies of the Chinese Communist Party and life in the base areas. This struggle and its achievements have been almost entirely neglected in the past. The book under review has attempted to redress this. In the same chapter, a whole section is devoted to literature before the Yanan Forum in the base areas behind the enemy lines, something previously passed over or used merely as a background to the Yanan Forum. It stresses that the revolutionary writers from Shanghai, who went to the base areas, made valuable contributions although they revealed their weaknesses because they did not become one with the workers, peasants and soldiers and had difficulty in adjusting to their new environment. It criticizes the assertion that these writers degenerated. This book confirms Mao Zedong's *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art* as an accurate appraisal of their experiences.

Even before the Cultural Revolution, literary research was limited to a narrowing circle of writers and their works. Instead of tackling complex problems, academics tended to avoid them or brush them aside wherever possible. Naturally this was detrimental to research. This book breaks new ground by giving bourgeois writers like Hu Shi, Zhou Zuoren and Xu Zhimo their due, all of whom made contributions to China's new literature but later deviated from its tradition. It rehabilitates revolutionary writers like Tian Han, Feng Xuefeng, Ding Ling, Xiao Jun and Ai Qing. Works which at one time made a strong impression are not denied their historical significance, even if the writers later committed some errors.

The book, however, has some weaknesses. It lacks the essential elements of a solid historical study, a common fault of such histories

published in China since the late fifties. The contributors do not explain literary phenomena in a historical or thematic context, or the relationship between literature and economic, political, social and other cultural factors. To what extent were writers influenced by China's literary traditions or foreign literature? What has a writer learned from his predecessors and how has he influenced his contemporaries and successors? Such questions are left unanswered. The book fails to explain similarities and differences between writers or why certain ones are grouped together. Many works are referred to, but few in connection with the style they represent and the trends they initiated. While several references are made to *The Goddesses* by Guo Moruo and its pioneering role in founding the new poetry, no comparisons are made to works of other poets and no explanations are given as to the influence it had on contemporary poetry. Similarly, when discussing Lu Xun and his contribution in the fourth section of Chapter VI, the authors, quoting out of context Lu Xun's views on the theory of literature and art, classify his arguments into five categories, such as the relationships between life or politics and literature and art, offering a series of abstract explanations without giving the historical relationships and the social context. Thus due to the authors' insufficient training in methodology and theory, the book leaves much to be desired.

Not entirely free from the conventional viewpoint and approach, they fail to resolve some questions and produce some unsubstantiated arguments and unsound conclusions. For example, while they have granted Hu Shi his proper place in the literary revolution during the May 4th Movement, they have not broken away from the conventional assessment that his literary reformation was merely formalistic. In fact any reform of literary form or language is a major contribution. Dante, Chaucer and Luther are esteemed for having initiated the use of their national languages in the literature of their day. Why are we so harsh on Hu Shi? Since form serves and is contingent on content, no literary reformation can exclude content. As a representative of the liberal bourgeoisie, Hu Shi exhibited weaknesses and a tendency to compromise, but his works and views were a departure from the old literature. If, as the

book claims, he "did not really touch content", then how can he be considered as an advocate of literary reform?

To some extent, a positive view is also taken of Zhou Zuoren in the same section, but there is no concrete analysis of him. No mention is made of his championing the "literature of man". While not the most progressive of the May 4th Movement, this slogan clearly marked a step forward, expressing the demand for democracy and opposing the anti-humanitarian, feudal literature. Lu Xun subsequently summarized the demands of the literary revolution initiated in the May 4th Movement as the "emancipation of human nature". The book also leaves out Zhou Zuoren's achievements in prose writing, his influence on his contemporaries, his change from fighter to hermit and his final collaboration with the Japanese. Of course, any proper evaluation of him is difficult and perhaps not the task of literary critics alone, since few have made a study of Zhou Zuoren. This reminds us that a simple affirmation of a writer's merits does not replace a careful analytical scientific approach, just as a simple negation could not suffice in the past.

The study of modern Chinese literature is a new discipline and its development has been hindered by many obstacles. However, the achievements since 1976 serve as an inspiration to accomplish more.

INTRODUCING A CLASSICAL PAINTING

Zhu Hengwei

Cui Zizhong's "An Immortal and His White Hare"

PUBLISHED in this issue is a portrait of Zhang Yandeng by Cui Zizhong, a painter of the late Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

A well-known scholar of integrity, Zhang Yandeng, born in Zouping County, Shandong, was a good poet and painter. In his last years he lived as a recluse in the Changbai Mountains. On the back of the painting, *An Immortal and His White Hare*, Zhang recorded how he and a friend climbed the mountain in the spring of 1598. Half-way up, a white hare flashed past them. This was considered as an auspicious omen. So he had a grotto and pavilion constructed there and named the spot Hare Cottage. He often went there later to enjoy the scenery and forget his cares.

Two years later, Zhang Yandeng returned from Zhejiang to Shandong. One day he read with delight the poem *Seeing Off Hermit Qi to the Changbai Mountains* by Han Hong, a poet of the Tang Dynasty (618-907):

Zhu Hengwei is an art specialist at the Shanghai Museum.

The ancient immortal White Hare
Returned home riding on the wind.
Water still flows past his cottage
Amid cold mountains and woods.

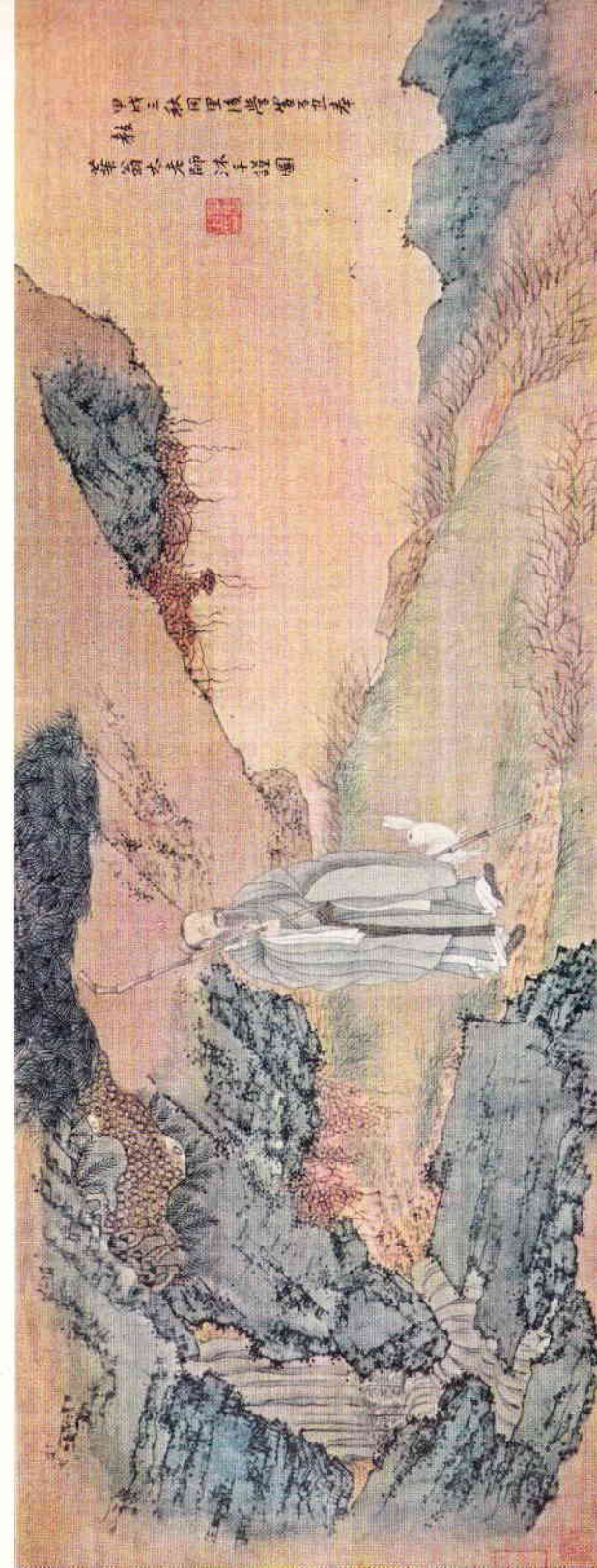
According to the footnote to the title of the poem, "the Changbai Mountains (Eternal White Mountains) were also called the Huixian Mountains (where an immortal was seen)". Elated by this note, Zhang told himself, "So, it was Heaven which prompted me to name the spot Hare Cottage."

In 1631, while in Nanjing, he went with a friend to visit a painter named Lei. In his reception room he saw a painting of two immortals. One wore a straw cape and was holding a fungus; the other, in a Taoist robe, had a bamboo staff in his hand and a white hare at his side. He eagerly asked who the two figures were. Lei replied, "The one in the straw cape is Chi Song Zi, the God of Rain; the other is the ancient immortal White Hare. After he practised Taoism and became an immortal, he lived in the Changbai Mountains to the south of Zouping County in Shandong. He used to ride a flying hare to call on his friends." Thereupon Zhang Yandeng made a copy of this painting and took it back to Shandong, where he hung it reverently in Hare Cottage.

Later, Zhang thought over these strange coincidences. Thirty-three years earlier, he had caught sight of a white hare and built Hare Cottage. Thirty-three years later he had found this painting of the immortal White Hare three thousand *li* away. So in 1632 he recorded these incidents in his essay *The White Hare*.

The painter Cui Zizhong was born in Laiyang, Shandong, towards the end of the Ming Dynasty. As a young scholar he was renowned for his poetry and portrait paintings. The latter, with their subtle colouring and skilful brushwork, were extremely lifelike. He gave most of these paintings to close friends. If rich men asked him to sell one, although very poor, he disdainfully refused.

Cui Zizhong painted Zhang Yandeng, the master of Hare Cottage with a white hare at his feet, combining the legend of



An Immortal and His White Hare
by Cui Zizhong

the immortal White Hare with Zhang's strange experience, to show his admiration of the recluse.

The scroll painting shows a level patch on a steep mountain, a projecting boulder behind it. The blank space on the right is bright to convey the clear air at that high altitude. On the left are jagged rocks and a waterfall. From a crevice in the mountain grows an ancient pine entwined with wisteria, while weeds and moss carpet the ground. All this suggests a fairyland seldom visited by men. Zhang Yandeng, his hair knotted on top of his head, in a Taoist robe, with a bamboo staff in his hand, is strolling slowly along. His austere expression shows that he is no ordinary mortal. The white hare beside him, pricking up its ears and looking round, appears clever enough to understand its master's wishes.

Cui Zizhong not only displayed originality in composition, but his technique is superb. Conveying a figure's spirit is of paramount importance in portrait-painting. Only if the painter familiarizes himself with his subject's character, behaviour and ideas, can he accurately depict his form and spirit. But the decisive requirement is technique. In *An Immortal and His White Hare*, the figure's face, though painted in simple brush strokes, shows him to be lean but vigorous. The lines in his robe are strong yet flexible. The rocks were painted with horizontal strokes to display their ruggedness. The colours used are fresh, tasteful and mellow. Faint touches of reddish brown on the green mountain, tree, wisteria and brambles make the scene more realistic and dynamic. The words inscribed by the painter on the right side read, "A fellow provincial and disciple of yours, I washed my hands clean and painted this portrait to pay homage to Hua Wong, my old master, in the ninth month of the year Jiaxu (1634)." Hua Wong means Zhang Yandeng.

This scroll painting on silk, 35.7 cm × 97 cm, is now in the Shanghai Museum.

Chen Huangmei

Back Among Friends

—Notes on the International PEN Conference

IN recent years, Yugoslavia having been the host country many times for the International PEN gatherings, the Yugoslav PEN Centre and Writers' Association expressed their desire for China to participate. Friends in England and France also shared this view. So it was with pleasure that a delegation of Chinese writers went to Bled to attend the annual International PEN meeting in May and handed in their application for membership.

I recalled, on my first evening in Bled, visits I had made years before to the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries, or those made by foreign writers and artists to China. It was through such exchanges that we writers and artists tried to establish a better understanding and world peace. We had witnessed the horrors of fascism in the thirties and forties.

Then I thought of the summer of 1966, when hundreds of writers and artists in Beijing were criticized and persecuted by the follow-

Chen Huangmei is a vice-chairman of the Chinese Writers' Association, and council member of the Chinese PEN Centre.

ers of Lin Biao and Jiang Qing. At that time the Conference of Asian and African Writers was taking place in the capital. After its close, those Chinese who had participated were also criticized. The Chinese Writers' Association was disbanded. The newly-established secretariat of the Association of Asian and African Writers was suspended. Chinese writers were forbidden contact with their counterparts abroad. Many great writers died in those tragic years, and many friends abroad were lost. China was cut off from literary developments in other parts of the world.

Because of the death of President Tito, the PEN conference was postponed until after his funeral. All the delegates watched the ceremonies on television, sharing in the great loss of the Yugoslav people.

On 9th May, the conference opened, with more than seventy delegates from nearly thirty countries attending. On the agenda that morning was the membership application of the Chinese delegation. All voted to accept, and so amid warm applause the Chinese delegation were made members. On behalf of the Chinese PEN Centre, I expressed our joy and gratitude to all those who had helped China to join, especially the members of the Slovenian PEN Centre.

Delegates from the various countries congratulated us and some mentioned the historic occasion in their speeches. When several East European writers learned that I had visited their countries in the fifties and sixties, they hoped that Chinese writers could visit them again in future. Another, who had been in China, said, "You know it isn't my fault that you can't come to my country!"

That afternoon we Chinese delegates took part in the business of the meeting. An important item for discussion was a report drafted by the Writers in Prison Committee. In this, a number of countries and regions including the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Vietnam and Taiwan were condemned for arresting and persecuting their writers. It called for their release or leniency towards them. A motion was passed that on the first Thursday in October, the day of support for imprisoned writers, all branches of PEN should hold activities on their behalf. The Chinese delegation voted in favour of the motion. A woman writer from Vietnam,

living in exile in Paris, said she would send us materials on jailed Vietnamese writers. One European writer expressed concern about writers in Afghanistan, who he feared must have been arrested or killed after the Soviet invasion. This shows the responsibility and obligation of writers all over the world to help and protect each other, which is one of the main functions of PEN.

Writers and poets belong to the people of the world. They sing of the people's happy life. But in certain countries they cannot but lament the sufferings of their people, voice their indignation, and even take up arms, writing magnificent epics with ink and blood! We live in a complex world and the responsibilities of writers are equally complex.

At the close of the conference, it was declared that the next one would take place at Lyon in September 1981. Belgrade will be the host in 1982. We left Bled on the afternoon of 10th May. We had made many new friends. We Chinese writers felt that we were back among friends again. While reflecting China's efforts to modernize, we shall promote friendship and mutual understanding among nations, and work for the liberation of all peoples and for a peaceful world. For this we will join hands with writers of all countries.

Chang Pin

The Ashington Miners' Paintings

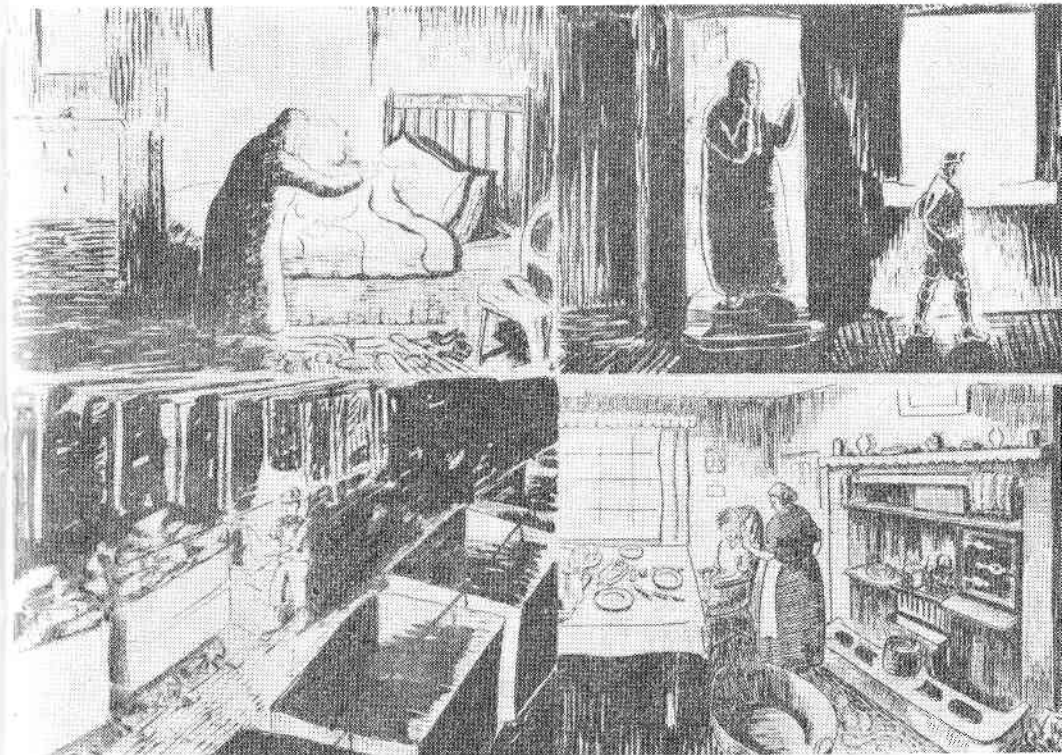
OVER the years many exhibitions of workers' art have been held in China, but few like the one of the Ashington miners' paintings. Ashington was a close-knit mining community in the northeast of England. The miners began painting in their spare time in the thirties, capturing an era which has vanished for ever. They recorded the days when young boys still worked in the mines and pit ponies were used to haul the coal to the surface. The paintings also reflected local customs, recreational activities and the changes in working and living conditions as the pits modernized and mechanized. Sponsored by the British Council and the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding, the paintings were accompanied by photographs of a changing mining community. After its opening in Beijing in April, the exhibition went on tour until July to the industrial centres of Taiyuan, Shenyang and Fushun.

The *Beijing Daily* commented, "These paintings not only reflect the conditions of the Ashington miners and their outlook during a twenty-year period from 1935 to 1955, but also demonstrate the commendable creative talents of the British working class..."

Chang Pin is a staff writer for *Chinese Literature*.

Of the 45 paintings by 14 artists, those by Oliver Kilbourn attracted most attention. His water colour in simple rough brush strokes, *Miner Setting Props in a Low Seam*, shows both the difficult working conditions at the face and the strength of the miner as a producer of material wealth. It is a powerful and symbolic work. His sketch, *A Boy's Day*, recalls the days when he started work as a pit boy at the age of thirteen. The whole picture consists of six drawings depicting the sleeping boy being awakened by his mother at two o'clock in the morning, his working day and his returning home exhausted, too tired to play with his friends. *A Portrait of Dr Bruce* is a work by Kilbourn in oils. The centre of the painting shows Dr Bruce's consulting-room, with his desk, medicine cabinet, medical instruments and a blackboard which he used in his first-aid lessons to the miners. In each of the four corners, his bicycle stands outside the homes of his patients, in the wind, rain, snow or late at night. Though the doctor is not portrayed, we can see clearly the image of a man devoted to the welfare of the miners. Chinese artists have long used the technique,

Miner Setting Props in a Low Seam by Oliver Kilbourn



A Boy's Day by Oliver Kilbourn

combining different places and times in one picture, while it is a European artistic tradition to portray the character of a person through his environment.

There were many other impressive paintings such as Fred Laidler's *Dead Pony*, A. Whinnon's *Pit Incident*, Lennie Robinson's *Spring Fever* and Jimmy Floyd's *Safety Helmet* and *Bait Time*.

Though Ashington has changed, these paintings remain as a unique witness to a historical period of transition between the old and new methods of mining. The amateur artists were not bound by established artistic rules and conventions, hence the vitality and power of their works.

Hu Bian

“Winter Jasmine”: a New Play

IN the awards for the plays, films and shows performed in celebration of New China's 30th anniversary, *Winter Jasmine* won a prize for the best script and best production. The play's merits lie in its realistic characterization and courage in dealing with a crucial problem in China today.

Set in a textile mill, the action takes place two years ago. It is around the character Bai Jie, a young woman worker, that the conflict centres. Her father had been declared in the past a counter-revolutionary; her mother had been labelled as a Rightist. Yet Bai is a conscientious worker, devoted to her job. Should her unfortunate family background be counted against her?

The secretary of the Party committee, Li Jian, supports and praises Bai as a model worker. Opposing this is Li's old wartime comrade and deputy secretary, Wu Yiping. She holds that to nominate Bai as a model is to overlook class struggle.

This difference of opinion between the two leading cadres poses a question of common concern current in Chinese society. How

Hu Bian is a staff writer for *Chinese Literature*.

can the talents of everyone be fully utilized in order to facilitate modernization?

The dramatist, Cui Dezhi, has carefully drawn the character of Li Jian. As a Party secretary deposed during the Cultural Revolution, he has suffered much. His wife, for example, was beaten to death. Yet he is not out to settle old scores. Instead, he puts the interests of the people and country above all. Bai is proclaimed at his insistence as a model worker, while his own daughter is not, since she is sloppy in her attitude to her work. He promotes a responsible, go-ahead and outspoken young worker, You Gui, to be in charge of supply and marketing. There are many pressures on him to act differently: from his daughter, his friends and the

Li Jian sympathizes with Bai Jie in her misfortune.



anxious workers fearing for his safety. But Cui Dezhi hasn't fallen into the trap of creating a superman. Li Jian is often anxious and hesitant. He has his human failings.

His antithesis is Wu Yiping. She is imbued with the old ways of thinking. She follows the rules literally, never daring to use her own initiative. Her political stand is influenced by ultra-Left ideas. Therefore she attacks Bai because of her family's political disgrace, while promoting Li Jian's daughter, Li Honglan, as the model worker merely on account of her good political family background. When You Gui informs her that dissatisfied customers are returning flawed cloth, Wu shrugs and remarks, "The purchase of all our products is guaranteed." Why doesn't she care about the mill? Why doesn't she care about the customers? In her eyes she regards herself as an exemplary Party member. But in reality, she has lost all the qualities a Party member should possess. She is typical of those leading cadres whose minds have become stale. They may talk in an impressive revolutionary way, but actually they are selfish and obstruct progress. Though they may be few in number, their negative influence should not be dismissed lightly.

The character of Bai Jie is an unusual one in modern Chinese literature. Others with similar backgrounds have appeared, of course, but they have never been portrayed so positively. Usually regarded as negative characters, they have at most been presented as turning over a new leaf and realizing the error of their ways. Although Bai Jie is young, she has suffered. Unlike some, she never became depressed and cynical. On the contrary, she faced her difficulties with courage and never lost her integrity. When Li Jian had a heart attack during the Cultural Revolution, she was the only one brave enough to give him first-aid. Another comrade Wu Xiaofeng, who was Wu Yiping's son, was imprisoned for mourning for Premier Zhou, and so Bai Jie visited him in jail, pretending to be his fiancée. Even her love affair was unhappy, but she held back her tears and concentrated on her work.

There are many young people in China today whose family backgrounds have counted against them in the past. Bai Jie is an encouragement to them. She is the winter jasmine of the play, the harbinger of spring.

Cui Dezhi is now 52 years old. To write such a play demanded some courage because it presented the daughter of a counter-revolutionary as the heroine. Why did he persist in writing it then? Although a writer for 32 years, Cui has often worked in factories, as a textile worker and trade-union official. His one-act play, *Liu Lianying* written in 1955, won first prize in a national contest and brought him fame. Its hero Liu Lianying is an outstanding Party member and textile worker. Thus it was natural that Cui gave his new play *Winter Jasmine* a familiar setting. But he also had some experiences which prompted him to consider the character of Bai Jie.

In 1977, while working in a textile mill, he met a woman worker who had never missed a day's work for twenty years. She had also completed a five-year quota in four. Yet she was discriminated against and prevented from attending a municipal conference of model workers. When Cui asked her why, she walked away crying. Later he learned that her father had been named as a counter-revolutionary. In another mill, a woman worker had produced 100,000 metres of flawless cloth, nearly twice the amount of another worker, who was lauded in the papers. But the woman worker's achievements were suppressed because her father had been judged hostile to socialism.

Cui also had known similar cases in the countryside, where sons and daughters or even grandchildren of former landlords were penalized by being assigned the heaviest jobs at the lowest rates of pay. Some could not even find marriage partners.

These young people had been brought up in New China. They had never exploited anyone. They were hard workers, contributing to building socialism. Cui refused to believe that to discriminate against them was the policy of the Party. This was confirmed, when in 1978 the stories of those two textile workers he had met were published in the papers. Cui therefore determined to write about this hitherto taboo subject. Since it was a theme which he had long had in mind, he finished the script in only a month.

The popularity of *Winter Jasmine* shows that Cui has expressed the wishes of the people, and fulfilled his responsibility as a writer to speak out the truth and promote a better society.

45th Anniversary of Qu Qiubai's Death Marked

Qu Qiubai, a distinguished leader of the Chinese Communist Party as well as a famous writer and literary critic, was executed by the Kuomintang on June 18, 1935. Under Lin Biao and the "gang of four", his name and reputation were posthumously sullied. Now they have been cleared and a meeting was held in June in memory of the 45th anniversary of his death.

The Party's Central Committee has requested that Qu Qiubai's manuscripts be collected and his works reissued.

Brief Biography of Cao Xueqin Published

A Brief Biography of Cao Xueqin by Zhou Ruchang, a well-known Redologist, was recently issued by the Bai Hua (Hundred Flowers) Literature and Art Publishing House in Tianjin. Completed in September 1979, it is a revised and enlarged edition of *Cao Xueqin*, which was published in 1964.

Though Cao Xueqin was a great 18th-century Chinese writer and the author of the novel *A Dream of Red Mansions*, little is known about his life. Collecting all reliable sources of information about Cao Xueqin, Zhou Ruchang has given an outline of his life, which should give readers a better understanding of the author and his novel.

Chinese Scholars Attend International Symposium on *A Dream of Red Mansions*

Three Chinese scholars attended the first international symposium on *A Dream of Red Mansions* held in mid-June at Wisconsin University, Madison, Wisconsin, USA.

Feng Qiyong reported on the Jiaxu (1754) edition of the novel. Zhou Ruchang talked about his view of the concluding 40 chapters of the 120-chapter edition. Chen Yupi spoke of his research on the impact of the novel on later fiction.

Award for a New One-Act Play

There Is a Warm Current Outside, a new one-act play written and staged by Shanghai amateurs, was recently presented with an award by the All-China Federation of Trade Unions and the Ministry of Culture.

The play tells of the contradictions within a family. The eldest brother, who went to work on a state farm in Heilongjiang Province, died in a snowstorm. His younger brother and sister went astray during the Cultural Revolution. The image of the elder brother keeps appearing in their memory and in hallucinations, urging them to become useful citizens, contributing to China's modernization.

The playwrights and cast were all young workers in Shanghai. The director was Su Leci.

Australian Ballet in China

At the invitation of the Chinese Ministry of Culture, the well-known Australian Ballet visited China recently and gave six performances of *Don Quixote* in Beijing and Shanghai, accompanied by the Orchestra of the China Opera and Dance Drama Theatre and the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra. The Australian artists were highly praised by Chinese dance critics and audiences.

Beijing Première of French Ballet *Sylvia*

China's Central Ballet Troupe performed at the Beijing première of the three-act ballet *Sylvia* last June. As a result of a cultural agreement with China, Madame Lycette Darsonval, prima ballerina, L'Opéra de Paris, set designer Bernard Daydé and ballet master Pascal Vincent were sent by the French government to help the Chinese troupe rehearse the ballet.

Memorial Temple of Qu Yuan Reopened

Qu Yuan (c. 340-c. 278 BC) was China's first celebrated poet, who composed many great poems including odes, elegies and the *Li Sao*. Wrongly condemned and exiled from the kingdom of Chu, he drowned himself in the Miluo River when he learned that the capital of Chu had been captured by Qin troops.

A temple in his memory was constructed shortly after his death. This is now located on Yusi Mountain at the north bank of the Miluo River, Hunan Province. It was reopened after renovation on 17th June on the anniversary of Qu Yuan's death.

A Qing-Dynasty Banned Book Recovered

A manuscript of *The Jade and the Sword*, an important collection of historical data of the late Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), which was banned during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) and which was considered lost by historians, was discovered in 1978 by the Bookshop of Antique Works in Shanghai.

Its author was Zhang Yaoping. In 24 volumes, the manuscript appears to have been completed in the early days of the Qing Dynasty. Its contents cover all aspects of the Ming Dynasty, including politics, the economy, culture and science. Its discovery will certainly provide important material for the study of Ming-dynasty history.

Heaviest Round Bronze Tripod Unearthed

Weighing 226 kg, the heaviest round bronze tripod found in China so far was recently unearthed in an ancient tomb at Chunhua County, Shaanxi Province. It is believed that this tripod was made in the Western Zhou Dynasty (c. 11th century-770 BC).

Buddhist Scriptures Found in Tibet

Twenty rare copies of Buddhist scriptures made on leaves of the sacred Bo tree (pipal) have been found in the Sakya Monastery in Tibet.

These books consist of 3,636 leaves, 40 cm long and 4 cm wide. The binding is in good condition. The writings in Tibetan, Mongolian and Sanskrit is still legible.

Earliest Collected Fossil Specimen Found in Jiangxi

A shell fossil of the Middle Ordovician Period was recently found in Wuning County, Jiangxi Province. It had been collected by the famous Northern Song-dynasty poet Huang Tingjian 900 years ago. The earliest collected and best preserved fossil specimen extant in China, it also predates and is of a finer quality than the one in the British Museum.

Cut in a rectangular shape like a book, it is 19 cm long, 11.4 cm wide and 2.5 cm thick. Exquisitely made, it has smooth dark-grey surfaces and is highly translucent. In the centre is the fossilized nautilicone looking like a white bamboo shoot. Also very important is a poem in Huang Tingjian's calligraphy engraved on one side. Since the Tang and Song Dynasties, many treatises have been written on fossils.

②

Subscribe now to Periodicals from China

CHINESE LITERATURE A monthly on Chinese literature and art, in English and French.

BEIJING REVIEW A political, theoretical weekly on Chinese and world affairs. Published in English, French, German, Spanish, Japanese and Arabic. Airmailed all over the world.

CHINA PICTORIAL A large-format monthly with pictures and concise articles. In Chinese, English and 19 other languages.

CHINA RECONSTRUCTS An illustrated monthly of general coverage. In Chinese, English, French, Spanish, Arabic, German and Portuguese.

EL POPOLA ĈINIO A comprehensive monthly in Esperanto.

SOCIAL SCIENCES IN CHINA An English quarterly.

SCIENTIA SINICA A monthly in English.

KEXUE TONGBAO A monthly in English, giving up-to-date information on scientific researches.

CHINESE MEDICAL JOURNAL A monthly in English.

CHINA'S FOREIGN TRADE A richly illustrated bi-monthly in Chinese, English, French and Spanish.

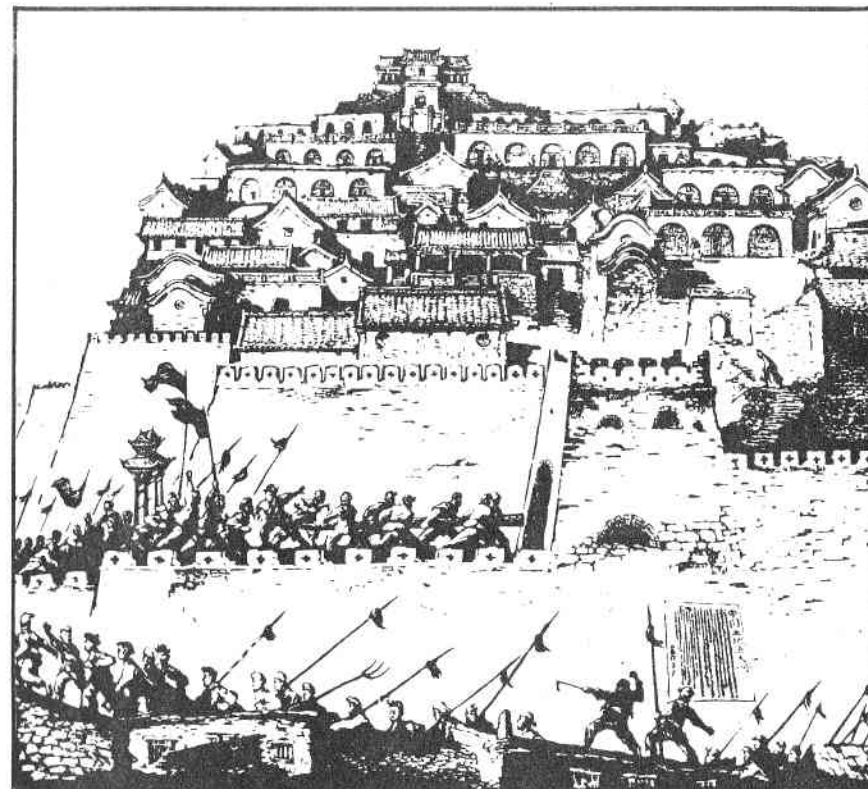
WOMEN OF CHINA A monthly in English.

CHINA'S SPORTS A monthly in English.

CHINA'S SCREEN A quarterly in Chinese and English.

A 20% discount on subscription orders from October 1, 1980 to January 31, 1981.

Order from your local dealer or write direct to the Mail Order Dept., GUOJI SHUDIAN, P.O. Box 399, Beijing, China.



An Attack on the Feudal Stronghold (woodcut)

by Yan Han



中国文学

英文月刊1980年第10期本刊代号2—916